MAN's

Great Duty:

OR, A

DISCOURSE

OF

The Care every Man ſhould take, to make ſure the Salvation of his own Soul.

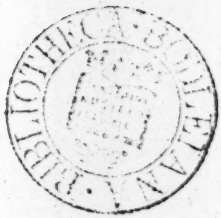
By *Samuel Bold*, Rector of *Styple* in *Dorſetſhire*.

Matt. XVI. xxvi.

What ſhall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?

LONDON.

Printed by **R. Smith**, and are to be Sold by *R. Baldwin*, near the *Oxford-Arms* in *Warwick-Lane*. 1693.


BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

THE
Epiſtle Dedicatory.
TO

Mrs. Mary Cooke, *Widow of that very Learned and Pious Man Mr.* William Cooke, *ſometime ſince Miniſter of the Goſpel in the City of* Cheſter, *and to the reſt of the Author's Friends in that City.*

I Preſent this Diſcourſe to you, as a publick Teſtimony that I am not unmindful how much I am obliged to you all, for your great Love and Reſpects to me, from my Infancy to this time: And in an eſpecial manner to you Mrs. *Cooke*, for the Motherly Affection, Care and Tenderneſs you have conſtanſtly Manifeſted towards me, through my Childhood and Youth, and are pleaſed ſtill to continue. I forbear receoning up par-

ticular Obligations, becauſe too numerous for ſo ſlow a Pen. I know you delight more in ſhewing Kindneſs and doing Good, than others would in having the World told that they do ſo. The Subject treated of in this little Book, I am ſure is very grateful to you all, and I am confident you will not be offended with my Diſcourſe, becauſe ſo familiar. It is a very ſad and afflicting Reflection to a ſerious Chriſtian, that there are ſuch multitudes who plainly appear to take no tolerable care of their own Souls, tho they profeſs the beſt Religion, and are furniſhed with eminent Advantages: For, *The Earth which is ſo Watered, and beareth Thorns and Briars, is Rejected, and is nigh unto Curſing, whoſe end is to be Burned. But Beloved, I am perſwaded better things of you, and things that accompany Salvation*, Heb. 6. 8, 9. It very much concerns you all to take care I be not miſtaken in you, and to uſe your utmoſt Diligence to bring forth Fruit in ſome proportion to the

Labour

Labour and Pains which have been beſtowed on you. You have enjoyed the Labours of that eminently holy Perſon and faithful Miniſter, Mr. *Cooke*, whoſe love to, and care of Souls, and zeal for their Salvation was ſuch, I am not acquainted with any words that are ſignificative enough to expreſs them. And therefore if you do not much exceed others in Divine Love, and all the Fruits of Righteouſneſs and Holineſs, you do not fully anſwer the Means with which you have been favoured. I am willing to remember you of your *Old Paſtor*, that you may thereby be induced to reflect upon your ſelves, and be quickned to give ſuch diligence to make your *Salvation ſure*, as he was always preſſing you unto. Were the excellent Treatiſes he left behind him, Publiſhed, they would contribute much to keep thoſe things always in your Remembrance, which he mainly inſiſted on whilſt he was Living, and to eſtabliſh you in the Truths and Duties you know and

have been practiſing. He was the greateſt inſtance of an indefatigable faithful Miniſter, and practical Believer, I was ever acquainted with. He was diligent and induſtrious, even to a Prodigy. His Humility and Modeſty did exceedingly veil his intellectual Merits. Few could comprehend the time he ſpent and the pains he took in his Study, much leſs the proficiency he made there. He had ſtrong Natural Parts, a great Memory, a quick Apprehenſion, was very Thoughtful, and dived very far into whatſoever he applied his Mind unto. He was the moſt void of all kind of Affectation (ſo far as my Knowledge doth extend) of any meer Man. His Learning, Miniſterial Labours and exemplary Piety, were ſuch, could the World be furniſh'd with an exact faithful Account of his Life, I am perſwaded it would yield as grateful and pleaſing Entertainment to the learned part of the World, and be as profitable to all People, who have a ſerious ſenſe of true

Piety,

Piety, as any thing that can be Publiſhed. But I doubt thoſe who knew him beſt, Died before him; and as for thoſe who were acquainted with him and do Survive, I ſuſpect ſome were not obſervant enough, and others did not know him long enough to underſtand very many of the moſt material Paſſages which would be neceſſary for ſuch a Compoſure. Indeed he did ſo conceal himſelf, I very much queſtion whether any Man was ever in a capacity to do him Right. Yet, a full Collection of the many great things his Friends remember, and which he could not hinder People from obſerving, would be of extraordinary uſe unto the Publick: Tho the whole Relation thereof would not comprehend the half of what he deſerved ſhould be ſaid, to perpetuate his Memory, and encourage a laudable Imitation. If this hint may prompt thoſe who knew him, to recollect themſelves, and jointly apply themſelves to ſuch a Work; I ſhall have this Satis-

faction, that I have been inſtrumental to put them on Acts of Friendſhip and true Piety, and have contributed a little to oblige the Publick. You are commanded not to be *Slothful, but followers of them who through Faith and Patience, are Inheritors of the Promiſes*, Heb. 6. 12. And I propound unto you Mr. *Cooke*, as a great Pattern you ſhould imitate in variety of Inſtances, which are within your reach, and pertain to the Stations you are in, as well as in the whole general tenor of his Converſation. I ſhall therefore paſs over in Silence many very conſiderable things I know concerning him, which muſt not by any means be omitted, by one who would attempt to write his Life. I muſt not therefore inſiſt on his Learning: And indeed he who would do him Juſtice as to that, muſt be furniſhed with a much greater meaſure of it, than I can hope to attain unto. Yet, let me take liberty to mention one thing, *viz.* That his skill in the Oriental Languages was ſuch, it procu-

red

red him a reſpect above many Perſons of great worth, from the *Famous Biſhop Walton*, whoſe eminent Talent lay in that ſort of Study. A very worthy Author (whom I am obliged to Love and Honour greatly for his ſubſtantial ſolid Learning, but eſpecially on the account of his exemplary Piety, and more than common Zeal for the good of Souls) hath told the World, *That Biſhop* Walton *would ſpeak Civilly to Mr.* Cooke, *tho he told him unleſs he would Conform, he could not help him.* I have particular reaſon to ſay, that when he ſpake thoſe words, he did it with intimations of great Regret; and that amongſt other reaſons of his Reſpect to Mr. *Cooke*, common to others for whom that Great Man had a Kindneſs, notwithſtanding they had different Sentiments from him, about ſome Matters, it was Mr. *Cooke*'s great knowledge in theſe Languages, which did peculiarly commend him to that

Conformiſts 4th. Plea for Nonconformiſts. p. 109.

Biſhop. Here I am to take notice, that Mr. *Cooke* was a *Nonconformiſt*, and ſo had different Sentiments about ſome inferior, and leſs ſubſtantial, rather meerly accidental Matters (about which all deſerving and good Men have not the ſame Apprehenſions) from what I have, and many more have, whom I greatly Reverence. His differing Judgment about theſe Matters, ſerved him for his own Conduct. But he manag'd his Diſſent from Conformiſts, with that Candor and Chriſtian Temper, he highly deſerved Love and Reſpect from all Conformiſts who were endowed with true Piety, or indeed had any ſhare of common Ingenuity. He did not abuſe his Diſſent to Uncharitableneſs and Cenſure; nay, he could not endure to hear a deſerving Conformiſt Reflected on. I remember once, a Perſon of no ſmall Abilities, and Mr. *Cooke*'s particular Friend, happen'd accidentally to reflect on a Conformiſt, on the account of his being a Conformiſt,

miſt, Mr. *Cooke* immediately reproved him with ſome keenneſs; the other Perſon replying, *I believe what I ſaid, is true*: Mr. *Cooke* preſently Silenc'd him, deſiring him the with ſome earneſtneſs of Speech to obſerve the Apoſtle's Rule, *Haſt thou Faith? Have it to thy ſelf*, Rom. 14. 22. I muſt alſo paſs over in Silence, Mr. *Cook*'s unwearied and indefatigible Labours in the work of the Miniſtry, in Praying, Preaching, Expounding the Holy Scriptures, Catechiſing, and Perſonal Converſe from Houſe to Houſe; tho in theſe things he very well deſerves to be imitated by all Clergymen of what ſort ſoever. An exact Relation of Mr. *Cooke*'s Loyalty would make a Volume, and repreſent him ſo conſiderable on that account, I do not queſtion, but moſt would be apt to ſuſpect the poſſibility of finding a compleat Parallel in the Records of Human Hiſtory. His Loyalty was not like that ſo much talked and boaſted of ſome Years ago, an empty Name, uſed to cover———. His Loyalty was truly

truly Chriſtian. He knew how to ſuffer with Patience and Meekneſs, and with a temper of Soul very agreeable to that of the Holy Jeſus, whoſe Ambaſſador he was, and whoſe Example he followed. And he did actually ſuffer in that manner, both *for* and *under* the *ſame Government*. True Loyalty is a neceſſary property of a good Chriſtian and faithful Subject. And I know not any one who hath lived within your Memory, who ſo well deſerved your imitation in this excellent Qualification, as your ancient Paſtor. This is indeed a Topick which deſerves to be enlarg'd on, becauſe the thing has been ſo horribly Counterfeited, and the *Name* ſo ſhamefully, yea, more than villainouſly Abuſed. But I forbear, becauſe ſhould I expatiate, I may find my ſelf obliged to drop ſome Expreſſions which would prove uneaſie to certain Perſons, who have happened to bring themſelves under ſuch Circumſtances, they perceive it poſſible for Men of haughty Spirits, who have ridicul'd the plea of Conſcience, who have been very daring, contemptuous and truculent in their Behaviour and Carriage, to have ſome *tender Places*. And I am not willing to exaſperate any Man, if I may avoid it, with Innocency. He Governed his Family with great Prudence, and with much

much Strictneſs. I think no Man ever attended more diligently to the intereſt of Religion in a Private Family, than he did. Every Morning and Evening after he had with his Family briefly implored the Divine aſſiſtance in Prayer and Praiſe, and a Bleſſing with that part of the Holy Scriptures which was then to be read, a Pſalm, or part of one was Sung, then a Chapter (in the Old Teſtament in the Morning, and in the New Teſtament in the Evening) was read, which he Expounded, reporting the principal parts of which it did conſiſt; then he gave an account of the ſubſtance of it, in as few words as the matter and parts of it would permit, afterwards explained the greateſt Difficulties which did occur; and in the laſt place ſhewed, what uſeful Inſtructions were eſpecially to be taken notice of. And then he ſpent at laſt a quarter of an Hour in Prayer and Praiſe, uſually improving much of the Chapter that was read, into matter for the one or the other. He was an extraordinary Perſon for all the parts of Prayer, tho commonly he did very much abound in confuſion of Sin, in admiring the Divine Excellencies, and in praiſing of God for his Benefits of all ſorts. On all occaſions he was very importunate for the Church of God, and that

the

the Kingdom of Chriſt might be Enlarged. He had no Child of his own, but did freely take into his Family three or four Children, for whom at his own Charge, he provided Food, Lodging and Raiment, and whom he inſtructed in Religion and Human Learning, in order to their attaining to ſerve their Generation according to the will of God. Theſe and the Servants he Catechiſed twice every Week, explaining every thing with a peculiar eaſineſs, for the helping them to underſtand every particular. When he could not any longer attend on his publick Miniſtry, he did not grow Idle, but performed moſt parts of it in his own Family, with the ſame care and diligence he was accuſtomed to uſe in Publick, tho there were not one Perſon more, than thoſe of whom his Family did conſtantly conſiſt. He was a very ſtrict Conſciencious obſerver of the Lord's Day. His Family was conſtantly to have their Worldly Buſineſs diſpatched by four or five of the Clock in the Afternoon of Saturday. Then he beſtowed an Hour and an half or more with his Family, in explaining and applying one or more Verſes of ſome Chapter in the Bible, (going over the Chapter, and uſually the Book in order) and in Prayer. After that, every one in the Family

was

was to go to his own Apartment for ſome time, either to learn the Catechiſm, or for private Reading and Devotion. About Eight of the Clock they Supped, and after that, he diſmiſſed his Family, according to his every days Cuſtom. He was always up early on the Lord's Day. Every one read a Chapter in the Morning; he then ſpent at leaſt an Hour and an half in expounding one or more Verſes of a Chapter, and in Prayer. Then he and his whole Family went to Church, (I ſpeak now of the time after his publick Miniſtry ceaſed.) About a quarter of an Hour after they were returned home, he Prayed with his Family, repeated the Sermon they had hear'd in Publick, and Preached and Prayed as he was wont to do in Publick before he was Silenced. A little time being allowed for Dinner, he and his Family went again to Church, and allowing after their return home, more time for every one in Retirement, he performed the ſame Religious Exerciſes he had performed betwixt coming from Church in the Forenoon, and going thither in the Afternoon. Every one in the Family having after Supper given an account of what they remembred, he concluded the day always with ſinging a Pſalm, and with ſolemn enlarged

Praiſe

Praiſe and Thanksgiving. He went through all this Labour and Work with unaccountable vigor, cheerfulneſs, and fervour of Spirit. The Viſits he made were uſually very ſhort, and moſt of the time was ſpent in pious Diſcourſe, or Prayer. He would be exceedingly uneaſie if he heard any Perſon ſpoken of Reproachfully. He would not by any Means permit any of his Friends and Acquaintance to uſe any harſh words concerning any Perſon who had unexcuſably injured him. If he heard of their doing ſo, he would be ſure to reprove them ſharply. He was very free in reproving his Friends and Relations, and all thoſe with whom he was Acquainted, as occaſion required, and in cautioning them againſt the appearances of Evil. His Humility was almoſt Aſtoniſhing; and he fortified himſelf to a ſtrange degree againſt every thing he could ſuſpect might ſo much as have a tendency to tempt him to have even a moderate Conceit of himſelf. I wrote to him once and uſed the word *Reverend* to him; he ſent me by the next Poſt a very Pious Letter, wherein he gave me a Reprimand for that *word*, and deſired me if I thought fit, to uſe that word to others, yet not to uſe it any more to him. He was wont to be mightily concerned when ever he

he heard of the outward Prosperity of his Friends, that they might be provided against, and secured from the temptations which attended such a Condition. And when ever he heard of their Adversity, or being any way Afflicted, how earnest were his Prayers that their Afflictions might be Sanctified to them! His Abstinence, Mortification, Self-denial, and the strict Watch he kept over himself, together with the heedful regard he had to Divine Providence in all Instances, would appear truly wonderful, could I give a full Relation of them. He did every Week set apart one whole day for private Fasting and Humiliation. He kept a constant Diary for his own private use, which he wrote in Latin, but in such a Character, I am perswaded no Man beside himself, could read an intire Passage. His Charity (considering what he had to live on, and what has been already said of it by the Bye) was as stupendious as any thing else. He would strain to the utmost to relieve the Indigent. What multitudes of Catechisms, *&c.* did he Buy to give to the Poor! And how much Mony he bestowed on poor Families, which he frequently Visited, that he might Instruct, Counsel, Exhort, and Comfort them, none can tell. For he distributed his Charity with

with all the Secrecy he could deviſe. Great numbers of poor People were continually relieved at his Door. I believe no Man was ever more forward than he, to contribute to the utmoſt of his Ability to promote any Charitable deſign. I never heard that any ſeemingly poor Perſon ever met him, and ask'd an Alms of him, who went away from him without good Advice, and a larger teſtimony of his being affected with his appearing Poverty, than could reaſonably be expected from him. But often did he enquire after, and ſeek out Objects and Opportunities for doing good in this kind. His regard to Righteouſneſs and Juſtice, was ſo exact and tender, peradventure the like hath ſcarce been heard of. I could name a Gentlewoman of good Quality in *Cheſter*, who offered Mr. *Cooke* ſome Monies, at a time when his Circumſtances were indeed very mean, but he refuſed to accept of it, which occaſioned her to urge him more earneſtly to accept of it, as a teſtimony of her Reſpect to him; but he would not be prevailed with to receive it; telling her at laſt, that he underſtood her Husband had ſome Creditors when he Died, and that they were not all as yet fully ſatisfied, and he could not in Conſcience receive Mony from her for his own uſe,

uſe, whatever his Straits might be, as long as he knew her Husband's Debts were unpaid. He was a great follower of Peace. He was extraordinary plain in his Habit, and void of every thing that could look like Flattery; but truly Civil, Courteous and Obliging, tho a perfect ſtranger to that Ceremoniouſneſs, which it may be the want of his habitual Honeſty and Integrity, hath brought ſo far into Faſhion, as even to be eſteemed an Accompliſhment. He was a great Enemy to the Pomps and Vanities of this evil World, and perhaps the exacteſt obſerver of the Baptiſmal Vow, that any (at leaſt) of theſe latter Ages of the World have produced. Thus far have I ſpoken from my own Knowledge of that excellent Perſon, and do but put you in remembrance of what you more fully know. That Mr. *Cooke* continued this courſe of Life, theſe Religious Exerciſes, and his Weekly Faſt, to the very Week in which he Died, I have been certified by one of you, a little after his Deceaſe. And that he was very patient and ſubmiſſive under his laſt Viſitation, being never heard to utter one complaint; that he ſpent the remainder of his ſtrength and time in Pious Diſcourſe on certain portionns of Holy Scripture, and in pithy fervent Prayers, till he actually reſign'd

ſign'd up his Spirit into the hands of his beloved Jeſus; which was about two or three of the Clock in the Morning of the Third of *July*, 1684. and 73*d.* year of his Age.

The more you reſemble that holy Man in all thoſe Inſtances which pertain to your ſelves, and wherein he was a faithful follower of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the more ſucceſsfully will you work out your own Salvation. You will be diſpoſed to yield up your Souls to God in due time, in ſuch a calm and comfortable manner, he reſigned up his Soul. You will be prepared to enter into that Reſt and Joy, you have ſuch abundant cauſe to conclude he entred into the poſſeſſion of almoſt Nine Years ago. *Thoſe things which ye have both learned and received, and heard and ſeen in him,* (agreeable to the Goſpel of Chriſt) *do, and the God of Peace ſhall be with you.* This comprehends the beſt Advice I can give you, and the ſubſtance of the ſincereſt Prayer tendred unto God on your behalfs,

By your Obliged Faithful

Styple, *June* 8*th.* 1693. *Friend and Servant,*

Sam. Bold.

The Preface to the

READER.

Reader,

WE of this Land have been of late entertained with a conſtant Series of Providences, little leſs than Miraculous. But our Murmuring untractable Temper, our unreformed diſobedient Lives, our averſion to, and our ſtiff, vehement, and unreaſonable Oppoſition againſt every thing which hath a tendency to promote the intereſt of Peace, Concord and Holineſs, do not portend any Good. The Ferment ſeems daily to grow higher and higher, and who can tell what tremendous Eruptions may follow? As long as our Wickedneſſes are multiplied, our Dangers do moſt certainly encreaſe, appear we ever ſo Careleſs and Indifferent. What aſtoniſhing Calamities and Confuſions

fuſions are at hand, I cannot undertake to Relate, I dare ſcarce adventure to Suſpect. But if God do whet his glittering Sword, and his Hand take hold of Judgment, he will undoubtedly render Vengeance to his Enemies, he will reward them that hate him, *Deut.* 32. 41. *I muy with good aſſurance affirm, that the beſt Service we can every one do for our ſelves, is* to make ſure the Salvation of our own Souls. *Our doing this, will not in the leaſt incommode the Publick; it may advantage and benefit it greatly. If we do thus, we ſhall be prepared for whatſo ever it will pleaſe our God in his infinite Wiſdom to permit. If we ſhall not be able to entertain the moſt frightful Occurrences, with leſs diſcompoſure than others, we ſhall moſt aſſuredly loſe leſs by them than they, becauſe our beſt and chiefeſt Intereſts will be ſafe. For no ſooner will a period be put to our preſent Pilgrimage and Warfare, but an abundant Entrance will be Miniſtred to us into the everlaſting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour*

Jeſus

Jesus Christ. If some of these Sheets had not been Printed before I knew they were in the Press, this Discourse might have come forth in another form, and a little better Polished. But *if it shall please God to make it (as it is) serviceable to quicken any of you to, or assist you in a just concern for your own Salvation, my design is answered, whose* desire and Prayer to God for you all is, that you may be Saved.

S. B.

MAN's

MAN's
Great Duty:
OR,
Every Man ſhould be principally Concerned for the Salvation of his own Soul.

Pſalm XXXV. v. 3. Part Laſt.

Say unto my Soul, I am thy Salvation.

IT is very evident by this Pſalm, that *David* (when he Compos'd it) was in very great Danger, in a very afflicted and diſtreſſed Eſtate, by reaſon of the exceſſive Power, inexorable Rage, and implacable Malice of his Enemies. Being in this condition, he did not depend on any outward Succours, nor would he betake himſelf to any unlawful Arts, but applied

himself to God, committing himself to his Conduct, Care and Protection, earnestly importuning him to undertake for him, plead his Cause, maintain his Right, defeat his Adversaries, and to defend, help and deliver him.

Which was undoubtedly the wisest course he could take, considering the circumstances with which he was at that time clothed: For tho the best People, those for whom God hath a singular respect, may be under such oppression and persecution, their case may to outward appearance seem altogether Remediless, yet their God can soon alter the Scene, effectually rescue and command Deliverance for them.

These words, *Say unto my Soul, I am thy Salvation*, may be considered either,

First, As an affectionate and earnest desire, that God would inwardly assure him, that he would effectually Save and Deliver him from those external difficulties and dangers with which he was surrounded, and by reason of which his case appeared quite Desperate. He was very well satisfied, God could make his Enemies examples of his Vengeance, in proportion to the Malice and Wickedness they had discovered in their unjust Persecuting of him, how numerous, powerful

powerful and crafty soever they were. But this was not enough to quiet and pacifie his Mind, and to dispel those fears and suspicions which did frequently disorder him, and make those Burthens others did lay upon him, much more weighty and insupportable than otherwise they would have been. His Spirit would be in a fluctuating and unsettled Frame, till God would assure him he would undertake his Defence, and cause him to see a happy period put to that ungrateful and disingenious, that rude, yea, barbarous Treatment and Persecution, with which he had been Exercised a long time, which had now almost tired him, and was ready to overwhelm and sink him.

Or, *Secondly*, As noting his diverting from what he had just before been so intent upon, and vehemently concerned about, and improving his present Troubles and Calamities, and his fervent Supplications for help against, and deliverance from them and their Authors, to excite and quicken him to a more affectionate and ardent Praying, that whatever his portion might be in this World, yet God would be pleased to certifie him, that his Soul should be Saved. Which is certainly one of the best uses we can make of bodily and outward Afflictions.

We may perceive the Psalmist putting a sudden stop to that mighty Current of Desire, as exprest in the former part of this Verse, and the other two which come before it, and turning that Stream into another Channel, speaking to this effect. Lord! tho I am very sensible of the distressed Estate I am now in, and therefore have been so importunate with thee, to *plead my Cause, and stand up for my Help*, yet the deliverance I have been begging being but a Temporal Mercy, I dare not be peremptory, or ask it absolutely at thy Hands; nor indeed would such a Deliverance fully satisfie me; I therefore entirely refer that to thy infinite Wisdom: But yet there is one thing I cannot, I will not be denied; one thing I desire above all other, and if thou wilt grant me that, I shall have as much as I can wish; it will fully satisfie me. The thing I thus importunately beg, is, that thou wilt assure me, *My Soul shall be Saved.*

How well would it become us? How much would it be to our advantage to improve outward Calamities; to make us eminently concerned for the welfare and happiness of our Souls? To make us more ardent in our Prayers, and vigorous in our Endeavours to obtain a good assurance, that God will certainly conduct us into that

blessed

bleſſed Eſtate he hath prepared for them; He doth ſet apart for himſelf?

But if there were no room for this laſt Interpretation, and we were certain the words did only relate to the Pſalmiſts deliverance out of that calamitous Condition, in which he was at that time; yet we have ground enough from his being ſo earneſt in Prayer for ſuch a Deliverance, to mind our ſelves in what manner we ought to concern our ſelves, that we may ſecure the Eternal Happineſs and Salvation of our Souls. Sure we may, we ought to uſe theſe words, *Say unto my Soul, I am thy Salvation*, according to the moſt Spiritual importance they will admit.

And thus the Words might prompt us to make ſome Enquiry. *Firſt*, Concerning the Salvation of the Soul. *Secondly*, Of what conſequence it is for a Perſon to have a ſolid aſſurance that he ſhall be Saved. *Thirdly*, From whom and how ſuch ſatisfaction may be obtained.

But I will confine my Diſcourſe at this time to this one Point, *viz.*

That every Perſon ſhould be very much concerned for the Salvation of his own Soul. We ſhould all of us be principally buſied to ſecure the Salvation of our own Souls, tho that is the thing which of all other,

is generally most neglected. People ordinarily find a great many matters to employ themselves about, which are of little moment in themselves, and will turn them to small, or no account at last. They are so taken up in providing for their Bodies, indulging their Appetites, pleasing and gratifying their Senses, and managing their earthly temporary Affairs; they think very seldom and very little of the eternal safety and welfare of their Souls. How prone are we to suffer almost any thing to divert and take us off from minding the Salvation of our Souls, with any tolerable degree of Attention and Seriousness; not to say with such care and solicitude as the importance and weightiness thereof doth call for and deserve? Other things are more thought of and minded than this; and the means we think proper to obtain them, are more diligently and delightfully used than those God hath directed us to, to make the Salvation of our Souls sure. But tho we provide our selves other work, this remains our *Duty*; our heedlessness and omission is not to be Justified; cannot discharge us from our Obligation; For, *What is a Man profited if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? Or what shall a Man give in exchange for his Soul?* Matt. 16. 26.

In

In diſcourſing of this Doctrin, I will obſerve this plain and eaſie Method. *Firſt*, I will explain the words in which it is Propounded. *Secondly*, Mind you of ſome Reaſons why every Man ſhould be ſo concerned for the Salvation of his Soul. *Thirdly*, Take notice of ſome Inferences, which the Point will evidently afford, and which may and ought to be improved by us to our great Advantage.

Firſt, I am to explain the terms of the Propoſition, which may be done by anſwering theſe two Queſtions. *Firſt*, What are we to underſtand by the Salvation of the Soul? *Secondly*, What is meant by a Perſon's being very much concerned for it?

Firſt, What are we to underſtand by the Salvation of the Soul?

The Soul is the moſt excellent part of Man; that part on which the Image of God was at firſt principally Stamp'd and Imprinted, which doth diſtinguiſh him from, and dignifie him above all the lower parts of the Creation, and which renders him capable of Knowing, Loving, Serving and Enjoying God, the Sovereign Good. It is an immaterial, ſpiritual Subſtance, which is not like the Body, lyable to Corruption and Death, but when ſeparated from it, doth enter into a State either of ſuch Happineſs

pineſs and Pleaſure we cannot at preſent form an adequate Idea of, or of Miſery and Torment, altogether unconceiveable. In which Eſtate it muſt continue unalterably to all Eternity.

The Salvation of the Soul then, is its exemption and Freedom, as from all the Sins Temptations and Evils, unto which Man is obnoxious in this Life, ſo from all the Miſeries, Curſes and Plagues Sin doth expoſe and make Man lyable to in the next World, and its fruition of God and Chriſt, and all that Glory and Bleſſedneſs in Heaven, God hath prepared for, and promiſed thorough Chriſt to them, who faithfully accept of, and comply with the terms he hath propounded in his Word, *Rom.* 6. 22, 23. *Rom.* 21. 6, 7, *&c. Matt.* 25. 34.

If any one ſhould now enquire why the Salvation of the Soul is ſo much inſiſted on, when it is moſt true in it ſelf, and certain unto Chriſtians, that the Body as well as the Soul, will in the next World be in a State of Happineſs, or Miſery for ever? Or why People ſhould not rather be minded, that it behoves them to take care to provide for the Salvation of their whole Man, than thus to be put in mind of, and excited to concern themſelves for the Salvation of one part of themſelves.

It

It may be pertinently enough replied, That the Soul being the nobleſt part, is ordinarily put for the whole Man. So that for a Perſon to mind the Salvation of his Soul, is the ſame thing with his minding the Salvation of himſelf. Our bleſſed Saviour ſpeaking of this ſame matter, the Evangeliſt St. *Matthew*, relates his diſcourſe in theſe words, *For what is a Man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole World, and loſe his own Soul? Or what ſhall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?* Matt. 16. 26. St. *Luke* delivers it thus, *For what is a Man advantaged, if he gain the whole World, and loſe himſelf, or be caſt away*, Luke 9. 25.

Beſides, the Body, when the Soul is departed from it, doth not preſently paſs unto a State of Torment, or Joy, but is laid in the Grave, where it remains without any ſenſe of either, till the Reſurrection, whence it muſt be raiſed up, and fitted for, and united to its own Soul, to ſhare with in that State to which it was aſſigned immediately after it was ſeparated from the Body. The Soul after its departure from the Body, appears before God, and is ſentenced to a State either of Horror and Torment, or of Satisfaction, Joy, and Pleaſure, *Luke* 16. 22, 23. *Luke* 23. 43. So that the Salvation of the Soul, doth note a freedom from Sin, Miſery, and

Torment

Torment, and enjoying a State of eminent Delight and Happineſs, immediately upon its departure out of this World. When the Body ſhall be again united to the Soul, it muſt partake of the ſame Happineſs with the Soul. The Salvation of the Soul implies and comprehends in it the Salvation of the whole Man. The happineſs or miſery of the Body at the Reſurrection, depends on the happy or wretched Eſtate the Soul was conſigned to at its departure from the Body. *All that are in the Graves ſhall hear his Voice, and ſhall come forth; they that have done good, unto the Reſurrection of Life, and they that have done evil, unto the Reſurrection of Damnation,* Joh. 5. 28, 29. Dan. 12. 2.

Secondly, What is it for a Perſon to be very much concerned for the Salvation of his Soul?

Anſw. To be firmly perſwaded, that it is of extraordinary importance to him, to have his Salvation well ſecured; to deſire ardently that it may be ſo, and to apply his utmoſt endeavours to make it ſure, by a due, and regular uſe of thoſe Means God hath appointed for this purpoſe. He hath a ſound knowledge of what the Salvation of his Soul doth mean. He often thinks with himſelf of what conſequence and moment it is to him, that he ſhould be Saved. He fre-

frequently conſiders in what *State* his *Soul* is, and what he may reaſonably concludes would become of it, if it were preſently to be called away from its earthly Tabernacle. He ſeriouſly conſiders what courſe he ought to take, that his *Soul* may aſſuredly be ſaved at laſt. *Such* kind of thoughts do often occur to him, and he is careful to entertain them, and proſecute them with ſeriouſneſs, till they produce ſome good effect. What can we think of thoſe who obſtinately neglect to meditate on their future *State*, and refuſe to conſider what a plain and certain tendency the ſins and wickednesſes in which they allow and indulge themſelves, have, to make them eternally Miſerable? Who are ſo very regardleſs, they leave their *Souls* to all adventures? Never ſeriouſly thinking of, reaſoning, and expoſtulating with themſelves about theſe matters? I ſay, what can we think of them, but that they are dangerouſly beſotted by *Satan* and their Luſts, if not dreadfully forſaken and given over of God in juſt Judgment, to go on *Inconſiderately* to the Vengeance of the Great Day? We muſt at leaſt conclude they are not much concerned for the ſalvation of their Souls. We ſhould certainly without any difficulty, make ſuch a determination in another Caſe ſo circumſtanced.

ſtanced. *He feedeth on Aſhes, a deceived Heart hath turned him aſide, that he cannot deliver his Soul, nor ſay, is there not a Lye in my right Hand?* But if we are really perſwaded that it is not a matter of indifferency, whether our Souls be ſaved or not, and that there cannot be any thing of ſuch extraordinary conſequence and moment to us, as having our Salvation ſecured, our thoughts will be very much employed about it: And theſe will excite and ſtir up affections in ſome proportion to the ſenſe we have of its worth, and how much our imtereſt is wrapped up therein. So that we ſhall not be ſatisfied with any thing, ſo long as we perceive this is in hazard. We ſhall pant and breath after this, as what is indiſpenſably neceſſary to our being Happy; That in which our whole welfare conſiſts, and without which all other things are inſipid, are as nothing, yea burthenſom, and vexatious. *I have longed for thy Salvation O Lord, and thy Law is my delight,* Pſal. 119. 174.

And he who is thus affected towards the ſalvation of his Soul, will diligently obſerve the directions God hath given, and uſe the means he hath appointed, in order to a Perſon's making his Salvation ſure. He will be careful to take God's way to ſecure his Salvation

vation, for he knows none but God can ſave his Soul, and that God will not ſave him but in his own way. He penitently, and with great humility and reverence, betakes himſelf to Chriſt; faithfully depends on him, and with much fidelity follows his Counſel, being ſenſible that *no Man cometh to the Father, but by him*, Joh. 14. 6. And that there is not any *Name given under Heaven but his, whereby we muſt be Saved: Neither is there ſalvation in any other*, Acts 4. 12. With how much greater fervour doth he pray for this, than for all other things? *As the Hart panteth after the Waterbrooks, ſo panteth my Soul after thee O God; my Soul thirſteth for God, for the living God; when ſhall I come and appear before God*, Pſal. 42. 1, 2. *O God, thou art my God, early will I ſeek thee; my Soul thirſteth for thee, my Fleſh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirſty Land where no water is. Thy loving kindneſs is better than Life*, Pſal. 63. 1. And he makes great Conſcience of keeping God's Commandments. *Lord, I have hoped for thy Salvation, and done thy Commandments*, Pſal. 119. 166.

The Salvation of his Soul hath a more ſettled prevailing conſtant power over him, than all other things have. He gives this the preference above all, and brings all other things to a ſubordination to it. This

hath

hath such a fixed prevailing influence on him through the whole course of his Life, that all other things are measured, esteemed, judged of, approved, or disapproved, according to the relation and tendency they have to further or obstruct this. He that is very much and duly concerned for the salvation of his Soul, is ordinarily thus affected, thus disposed, thus resolved.

He will not deliberately give way to, or adventure on any thing, he is sensible will endanger, obstruct, or hinder the Salvation of his Soul, tho he hath never so many inducements to it, on other accounts; he dares not adventure his Soul for the pleasures of Sin, the profits of the World, the applause, approbation, esteem and favour of Men. Shall I pay so dear for these fading, perishing airy things at present, as to occasion my sad and mournful repenting of my purchase and bargain to all Eternity? God forbid I should ever be so infamously Sottish, so execrably Wicked, to pawn my Soul, and stake my Salvation at such a disingenuous, impious and unworthy rate; to offer such indignity and contempt to the precious Blood of the Covenant, as to sell it at such a common and unhallowed Price.

Yea, he will apply himself with vigor to any thing he understands from the word

of

of God; will promote and further his Salvation, tho he perceives he ſhall certainly encounter very formidable diſcouragements; he will paſs quietly through reproaches, patiently ſuſtain Loſſes, and chearfully endure Tribulation, and inhuman Barbarities, rather than omit, or neglect any thing which pertains to, and muſt accompany, and will help forward his Salvation. Tho Bonds and Afflictions abide with me, and wait for me every where, yet none of theſe things ought to move me. Lord, let me never count my Life dear to my ſelf, ſo that I may but finiſh my Courſe with Joy.

When I ſay that every Perſon ought to be very much concerned for the Salvation of his own Soul; you are not to underſtand this as if I did exclude our being obliged to concern our ſelves for other Peoples Salvation: Thoſe who are unconcerned for their own Salvation, will not be heartily concerned for the Salvation of other Peoples Souls. They may do ſeveral things (being induced thereunto by ſome mean and ſelfiſh conſiderations) by which others may be much advantaged and aſſiſted in working out their own Salvation. But they who are altogether regardleſs of their own Souls, will be every jot as little concerned for others. But he who is truly ſenſible of the

the great worth of a Soul, and the weightineſs of Salvation, and therefore is heartily concerned that his own Soul may be ſaved, will in his meaſure and proportion be concerned that others may be ſaved too.

Having ſaid thus much in order to a direct explaining of the Doctrin, I am in the next place,

Secondly, To propound ſome Reaſons, why we ſhould every one be very much concerned for the Salvation of our own Souls? And they are theſe,

Firſt, God hath by his plain and expreſs Command, made it our Duty. We cannot but acknowledge, both, that God hath an unqueſtionable right to appoint us our Work; and that he beſt underſtands what it is we ought to make our principal Buſineſs. So that if he hath enjoyned us to be more concerned for our Salvation than any thing elſe; we are obliged unto it by all the reſpect we owe unto him, and that deference which is due from us, to his Authority. We cannot be regardleſs of Salvation, but we muſt be juſtly reputed guilty of offering the moſt horrid and unexcuſable Contempt to the Divine Majeſty; of renouncing his Authority, and refuſing to obey him in an Inſtance wherein his Grace

and

and Love, his regard to, and tenderneſs for our chiefeſt good, are eminently manifeſted. God's Command ſhould ſway with us in any caſe, more than any thing elſe, but eſpecially in a caſe of this nature, where we have ſo evident a Demonſtration, that the Command it ſelf chiefly reſpects our higheſt Advantage. How can a refuſal to comply with and obey ſuch a Command, eſcape being Interpreted, to proceed from a ſpightfulneſs againſt God, and an unaccountable hatred and malice to our own Souls? And can any thing be enjoined in plainer terms, in more expreſs words, than our Lord hath uſed in commanding us, to concern our ſelves very much, and to uſe our utmoſt care and beſt diligence, to provide for, and make ſure of Salvation, and eternal Felicity in the next World? Could any thing be ſpoken with greater Emphaſis, or repreſented with more Earneſtneſs, and better teſtifie the utmoſt force and ſtrength of Affection, than what you read, *Deut.* 30. 19, 20. *I call Heaven and Earth to record this day againſt you, that I have ſet before you Life and Death, Bleſſing and Curſing: Therefore chuſe Life, that both thou and thy Seed may Live; that thou may'ſt love the Lord thy God, and that thou may'ſt obey his voice, and that thou may'ſt cleave unto him; for he is*

thy

thy Life and the ſtrength of thy days. Are you not in expreſs terms commanded, *To work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling?* Phil. 2. 12. *And to give diligence to make your calling and election ſure, that an entrance may be miniſtred to you abundantly into the everlaſting Kingdom of our Lord, and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt,* 2 Pet. 1. 10, 11. *And to ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs,* Matt. 6. 33. And to *ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait Gate,* Luke 13. 24.

Now, can any thing be ſo execrable, as to chooſe to deſtroy and make your ſelves eternally Miſerable, rather than practically own God's Authority, and obey him in that, wherein he hath given the fulleſt diſcovery of his having a ſingular regard to your greateſt and unconceivable Happineſs? The Command of God ſhould ſway and prevail with us to apply our ſelves to any thing tho ever ſo difficult, tho we were perfectly ignorant of the Reaſon, why he doth enjoyn and make it our Duty. But how much more then ſhould his Command influence us, when we evidently perceive the reaſon of his Command is moſt expreſſive of his Love, and doth apparently carry with it a wonderful force drawn from Principles ſo deeply rooted in our Natures, as are our own Preſervation and Happineſs? His intereſt-

intereſting his Authority thus in this matter, ſhould not only prompt us to take notice of the tender regard he hath to our perfect Felicity, but alſo how prone we are to be careleſs of, and neglect it, and with what heedfulneſs, care and diligence it behoves us to attend to and follow it, leſt we ſhould fail and miſcarry in ſo important a Buſineſs.

Secondly, It is a buſineſs of ſuch weight and conſequence, that it is to render us capable of attending to it, and to aſſiſt and quicken us to carry it on with Succeſs; that we are endowed with thoſe faculties which are peculiar to us, as we are rational Creatures; and that we are entruſted with Life and Time, after that we arrive to years of Diſcretion; and that thoſe advantages are afforded us which are ſingularly adapted to further us in it. All theſe are Talents committed to our truſt; and thoſe who will acknowledge them to be ſuch, muſt needs own, they ought to be employed to the ends for which they are eſpecially deſigned. Now, ſeeing they are peculiarly fitted both in their own Nature, and by divine Appointment, to promote our Salvation, it muſt greatly concern us to uſe them for that purpoſe, for which they were intended. As the Members and parts of

our

our Bodies are naturally fitted and particularly deſigned for the preſervation, nouriſhment, and perfection of our outward State, ſo our rational Powers and Faculties are directly and immediately prepared and appointed to be uſed to ſecure and advancethe good and welfare of our Souls. Our Underſtandings, Wills, and Affections, are never employed ſo pertinently, as when they are duly exerciſed about thoſe matters, which will contribute moſt effectually to our Salvation. This is the nobleſt and moſt excellent uſe we can make of them. And if they colud not be improved to this purpoſe, it would not be a valuable advantage to be endowed with them. This is alſo the great buſineſs for which God doth allot us time in this World. We have indeed other things to employ our ſelves about, whilſt we are here in the Body, but all other Buſineſſes are ſubordinate, ſhould be ſubſervient to this. For this is the *one thing neceſſary.* Life and Time are not allotted us, meerly to Eat and Drink and take our Pleaſure and Paſs-time here; or meerly to drudge and toil for the neceſſaries or varieties of a temporary State, but chiefly to provide for a future and eternal Happineſs, by ſuch ways as God hath preſcribed. For what is to be done by us in order to our

Salvation,

Salvation, must be done whilst we have our abode in this World. It will be too late to think of busying our selves for our Salvation, when we are removed hence. *The night cometh*, (saith our Saviour) *when no Man can work*, Joh. 9. 4. *Whatsoever therefore thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the Grave, whether thou goest*, Eccle. 9. 10. *So teach us (O Lord) to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto Wisdom*, Psal. 90. 12.

Can we imagin it is for any thing else, but to oblige us to, and assist us in the minding of our Salvation, and to excite and quicken us to a great, regular, and due concernedness for it, that God doth afford us his Word, Ordinances, and the means of Grace? Are they not all evidently designed, to mind us that this is that for which we should be most concerned, and to direct, help, and lead us in the true, infallible, and most suitable way unto Salvation? *Tit.* 2. 11, 12, 13. And is it not certain, that our neglecting to improve Gospel advantages to this purpose, will exceedingly encrease our Danger, and render our State hereafter, more than ordinarily Dolorous, and Dreadful? *Wo unto thee* Corazin: *Woe unto thee* Bethsada, *&c.* Matt. 11. 20, *&c. How shall we*

escape

escape, if we neglect so great Salvation? Heb. 2. 3. Lay aside the consideration of the Salvation of the Soul, and People may attend to, and follow all their other Businesses and Affairs every jot as well, without the Gospel, as with it.

Thirdly, The salvation of a Man's Soul, is a matter of the greatest consequence he can possibly concern himself about. It is agreeable to the dictates of Reason, and the Maxims of Prudence, that we should be most concerned for that which doth most concern us. And doubtless, that which is of the greatest worth and excellency in it self, in which all our Interests are wrapt up; and without which, there is no possibility of our being safe and happy, is of the greatest Moment imaginable to us; and is that which it behoves and concerns us to use our utmost care about; and such is the Salvation of our Souls.

For if our Souls be safe and happy, it is not possible we should be Miserable. If we are really in the way to Salvation, and have an Interest in God through Christ, so that his power becomes engaged to keep us safely unto Salvation, let what will happen unto us here, it cannot make us unhappy. It will not be long before we shall be perfectly out of the reach of every thing that can

can be called *Evil*: And a well grounded hope of Salvation will make any thing Portable which can befall us in this World. And as ſoon as we have paſs'd through this Wilderneſs, and are got from amongſt the Briers and Thorns which grow here below, we ſhall inherit a Pleaſure, a Joy, a Portion; in compariſon with which, all that this World can afford, is in every reſpect leſs, and more inconſiderable than the emptieſt Dream, or moſt fleeting Shadow we can think of. Why then ſhould we be afraid of any thing that cannot hinder us from being for ever Bleſſed? We ſhould not be afraid of any thing but Sin, 'tis that alone which is diſpleaſing to God; that alone which expoſes to eternal Miſery: 'Tis only that which can hinder our attaining to the Salvation of our Souls, *Matt.* 10. 28.

But if our Souls Miſcarry, all other things cannot make us amends. There is no remedy for a loſt Soul. We may be diſappointed to a notable degree in our worldly Deſigns, and Affairs, and Intereſts, and not be *Undone*. But if the Soul be Damned, there is no reverſing that Sentance. If the Soul periſh and be ſent to Hell, it cannot be redeemed thence. All the Pleaſures, Riches Honors, Bravery, Applauſe

Applauſe, *&c.* in the World, tho enjoyed without any Interruption, the whole ſpace of a Man's abode on Earth, will not avail, or profit, help, or comfort him one jot, will not abate or qualifie his Sorrow and Torment one Moment, when his Soul doth ſink under the weight of its own Guilt, and God's juſt Indignation, into unquenchable Flames. Former enjoyments are paſt, and ended, what was left behind, will not purchaſe one Minutes Eaſe: And the remembrance of antiquated Delights and Pleaſures, will but encreaſe and make preſent Tortures more wracking and vexatious; heighten and increaſe thoſe Torments and Horrors, which do every Minute unconceivably over-weigh all the Jollities of an ill-ſpent Vitious Life. What can you conceive more terrifying than to hear it ſaid, *Remember thou in thy Life-time receivedſt thy Good Things*, Luke 16. 25.

Beſides a due concernedneſs for the Salvation of our Souls, is the ſureſt courſe we can take, to be provided with what is moſt convenient for us, till we arrive at the end of our Faith and Hope, *the Salvation of our Souls.* We have reaſon enough to be well ſatisfied, if we have Journy-proviſion, where we are Strangers and Pilgrims, if as ſoon as ever our Journy is over, we ſhall enter

enter into the Heavenly *Canaan*, and be *for ever with the Lord*. And if we be duly concerned for our Salvation, we have as good assurance as can be desired, to be supplied with what infinite Wisdom shall judge most fit and convenient for us, during our Travel. Our allowance of outward things shall be more, or less, according as our Heavenly Father shall see most for our good. *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you*, Matt. 6. 33. *The Lord God is a Sun and Shield; The Lord will give Grace and Glory; no good thing will he withold from them that walk uprightly*, Psal. 84. 11.

Fourthly, A great concernedness for the Salvation of the Soul, is the only way to secure it. Negligence, Sloth and Heedlessness, are not look'd on as the way to great, honourable and comfortable Fruitions, in this World; why then should they be thought consistent with a rational expectation of the glorious things which are reserved in Heaven? If you are sensible of the worth of your Souls, and do desire they may be Saved, you must needs own you ought to be much concerned for their Salvation; or you must renounce and depart from the common Rules of Reason, and from those Principles by which all Mankind

do govern themſelves, in ſeeking after what is of great value in it ſelf, or what they do magnifie by their own Phancies and Imaginations, unleſs you do know ſome other way, by which their Salvation may be made ſure. Now, the Salvation of the Soul depending wholly on the free Grace and good Pleaſure of God, there cannot be any way to ſecure it, but what God hath been pleaſed to fix upon and appoint. Can you therefore produce a proof that God hath revealed, and declared, that it is his purpoſe to ſave any one who is of years of Diſcretion, whether he do or do not concern himſelf in good earneſt for his Salvation? If you cannot produce a Revelation that is very plain and expreſs to this effect, you run the greateſt risk imaginable, and act with the greateſt inconſiſtency that can be, with the Principles of Reaſon and Prudence: If you be not mightily concerned for your Salvation, How unavoidably will all the methods you uſe, with reſpect to other Matters, upbraid, reproach, and condemn your inadvertency, and regardleſsneſs as to this, which is of infinitely greater conſideration an importance to you than all other things can be? Moreover, you may remember it hath been proved to you by expreſs Scripture, that God hath appointed this as the courſe you muſt take, if you will make your Salvation ſure.

Indeed,

Indeed our concernedneſs for the Salvation of our Souls, be it ever ſo great, does not, nor cannot procure their Salvation, by virtue of its own intrinſick worth and excellency. We cannot be our own Saviours. We are wholly beholding to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and to free Grace for ſalvation. But we muſt in obedience to God, acquit our ſelves ſtrenuouſly for our Salvation, in uſing thoſe means, and following thoſe directions he hath appointed and aſſigned for this purpoſe, depending upon him to Sanctifie and make this obediential compliance with his bleſſed Will Effectual, for the preparing us for, and bringing us unto that Salvation, whereunto he hath appointed the ſame. Our coming to Chriſt when we are truly ſenſible of our Wants and Miſery hath no intrinſick Vertue and Excellency of its own, to purchaſe and procure us Acceptance with him, yet it is the neceſſary and only ſucceſsful way, a convinced, ſenſible, humbled Sinner can take to obtain acceptance with him. This being what he Commands, and that to which he hath annexed his compaſſionate and merciful Promiſe, *Joh.* 6. 37. *Matt.* 11. 28. The neceſſity there is of our taking the courſe I have been diſcourſing of, doth principally ariſe from God's appointment: The ſucceſsful-

neſs of it, ariſeth wholly from the vouchſafements of Divine Grace.

Fifthly, Every Perſon's concernedneſs is neceſſary to the Salvation of his own Soul. I ſpeak to Perſons who are of years of Diſcretion; and my Diſcourſe is about the Salvation of thoſe who are Adult. Other People may and ought to be concerned for your Salvation, in their way, to the utmoſt of their Power, according to the Capacities thy have, and the Offices they are in, and the Relations they bear to you. But what others can do, will not profit unto Salvation, if you are altogether unconcerned about it your ſelves. Moſt of your Worldly Buſineſſes, may be done for you by others. Other People may Build your Houſes, make your Cloaths, till your Grounds, feed your Cattle, gather in your Harveſts, *&c.* But other People, (excluding your particular perſonal concerning your ſelves for your Salvation) cannot do all that is neceſſary to be done, in order to your being Saved. Thoſe who have ever ſo many at work for them, muſt (notwithſtanding that) Eat and Drink for themſelves, or elſe they will ſoon be Famiſhed and Die. Other Peoples Eating and Drinking will not ſuſtain you in Life; their wearing of Cloaths, will not preſerve you

you from Cold, or warm and heat you; their Sleeping will not refresh Nature in you. These are things all People must do for themselves; and we are all sensible enough of the same. O that we were every one as fully convinc'd that it is every jot as necessary, for every particular Person to be very much concerned for his own Salvation. Other Peoples Knowledge, Faith, Holiness, *&c.* will not save our Souls. Every one that will be Saved, must Repent of his own Sins, must himself believe in Christ, and be made Holy, and must Personally observe and keep God's Commandments.

Sixthly, The Enemies of our Souls do concern themselves very much to hinder our Salvation. Every Man hath variety of Enemies, who in their several ways do busie themselves to hinder the Salvation of his Soul, and to make his Damnation sure. Does it not therefore behove him to do what he can, that his endeavours to frustrate and defeat their Projects and Designs, may be equal to theirs? *Be sober, be vigilant, because your Adversary the Devil as a roaring Lyon, walketh about seeking whom he may Devour, whom resist stedfast in the Faith.* 1 Pet. 5. 8, 9. Why should the Devil hate your Souls more than you love them? should not you be as much concerned for

their Salvation, as he is for their Damnation? Are not you more intereſted in your own Souls, than he is? Doth it not more concern you what will become of your Souls, than it doth him? The Damnation of your Souls, will be no real advantage to him, notwithſtanding he ſeeks and labours for it ſo induſtriouſly; but how unconceivable will your Benefit be, if they be Saved? We have Enemies in the World, and Corruption within us, unweariedly labouring to obſtruct our Salvation. And ſeeing we have ſo many and ſuch induſtrious and indefatigable Enemies, waiting to do us a Miſchief, even the greateſt Miſchief imaginable, to hinder our Salvation, to deſtroy and ruin our Souls for ever; in what manner will it become us to acquit our ſelves? How concerned ſhould we be for the Salvation of our Souls, which are thus beſet?

If we have any regard to the Authority of Almighty God, or think our ſelves obliged to employ the beſt Talents and Advantages which are committed to our truſt, to the ends for which they naturally ſerve, and to which they are particularly Ordained; if we believe everlaſting Salvation is of any great moment to our ſelves, and that it is not the effect of Chance, but will be regularly diſpenſed; if we are ſatisfied that

we

we cannot be ſaved by Proxy, and that it doth behove us to improve the diligence and induſtry of our worſt Enemies, to our own greateſt Advantage; what hath been diſcourſed, may in ſome meaſure ſerve to beget, or awaken in us a perſwaſion, that we ought to be very much concerned for the Salvation of our own Souls. And therefore I will now proceed,

Thirdly, To take notice of ſome Inferences which this Doctrin doth evidently afford, and even prompt us to take into our conſideration, and of which we may make a profitable Uſe and Improvement.

Firſt, The Soul of Man is exceeding precious: 'Tis this on which we ſhould ſet the greateſt value, and of which we ſhould take the greateſt care. It is of the greateſt worth in it ſelf, and may be improved to our unexpreſſible advantage. But if it be finally ſlighted and neglected, the damage which will follow, will be altogether irreparable. Man conſiſts of two Parts, a Body, and a Soul; The former is of a frail and corruptible Nature, of very little Excellency, and of no uſe at all when the Soul is ſeparated from it. As long as the Soul continues in it, it is ſenſible of Pleaſure, or Pain, according as things are proportioned, or diſproportioned to its Organs, Appetites, Frame

or State, but no ſooner doth the Soul part from it, but it becomes perfectly ſtupid and ſenſeleſs, and preſently molders into Duſt. Fooliſh miſerable Wretches that we are! How unexcuſable are we, in being ſo immoderately ſollicitous about our fading Earthly Part and its little diminutive Intereſts, to the extraordinary prejudice and hazard of our Souls, which are Immortal, and evidently our beſt and nobleſt Part! When the Body returns to the Duſt, the Soul doth not ceaſe to be, but then becomes more ſprightly and active, more apprehenhenſive of what is Pleaſing, or Dolorous, than it was before.

We do all put a difference betwixt things, eſteeming ſome more Precious than others, and accordingly we proportion our love to, and care of, and concernment for them. But our great fault is this, we are haſty and inconſiderate, we are raſh and precipitate; we ordinarily judge amiſs, and value things above their worth; ſetting a mighty Price upon thoſe things which have no intrinſick Excellency, but are intirely beholding to our own Fancies, or vulgar Opinion, for all their reputed worth, and ſlighting and making no account of that, which is ſo tranſcendently Excellent; we cannot poſſibly advance our eſteem for it, to thoſe degrees

degrees it deſerves. Lord! How ſhall we duly deplore and bewail our ſelves, upbraid and reproach our Folly! ſeeing we have ſo long extravagantly admired and inordinately doated on empty Impertinencies, whilſt our Souls, which are of unconceivably greater worth than all the World, have been left unregarded and unminded by us! What vile and ungrateful Wretches are we, thus to diſhonour our ſelves, and diſparage and proſtitute the Souls God hath entruſted us with! How loathſom may we juſtly appear in the ſight of God, and of all his Creatures? 'Tis owing to our Souls, that we are capable of ſetting a value upon any thing; and having Souls committed to our truſt, could we behave our ſelves more unworthily, than to caſt off all care of them, and degrade them to the ſordideſt Drudgery we could deviſe? All Worldly and Earthly Enjoyments and Objects, will be as nothing to us; the pleaſure and delight we took in them, will be gone, and tho the things themſelves may ſtay behind, we cannot make any more uſe of them, when once our Souls have taken their flight into the other and unſeen World. And what can we expect will be their lot and portion, who have taken no better care of their precious Souls, have ſo neglected and abuſed them here?

Did we rightly understand, and were we duly affected with the worth and preciousness of our Souls, we could not make so light of them as we do. We should then certainly concern our selves much to secure their Salvation. Do I believe my Soul came immediately from God, and that it is of a Divine Extraction; and that the greatest Excellency of my Body, consists in its being fitted for the use and service of my Soul, during its abode in it? And can I by any means be reconciled to cast off all concern for it, and to make such a Heaven-born Offspring, a Slave to my drossy and earthly Part? Does not all corporal Beauty and Lustre, presently disappear and vanish, after the Soul is separated from it? How great a Value should we set upon our Souls, were we seriously and strongly perswaded, that as soon as they leave our Bodies, they *must return to God, who gave them*, Eccles. 12, 7.

It is true, we cannot at present distinctly and fully understand what the Soul is; but we easily perceive we have such a noble and sublime Part, by those Actions which are peculiar to it: It Thinks, it Understands, it Wills and Chuses; it Loves, it Reflects upon it Self and all its Actings; it converses with Objects, which are not Objects

jects of Sense; it compares sensible Objects one with another, and raiseth notions from them: And we are sure the Body can do none of these things, when the Soul is gone from it. And tho it is naturally void now of its Primitive Holiness and Purity, yet it still retains some Marks and Characters of the Divine Image upon it, and it is still capable of having its first Excellency and Beauty Repaired, Restored, Improved. Oh! how large and vast are its Capacities? What work can it do! What Exercises may it perform: What Objects can it converse with! What great and glorious things may it be employed about! And what blessed Privileges may it be advanced unto! It is capable of having the Divine Image again Imprinted on it, with a Lustre and Glory far exceeding the utmost our most extended thoughts can possibly comprehend, or reach unto. It is capable of Divine Illumination, and effectual Sanctification of a partial, but blessed and joyful Communion with God at present, and a perfect Fruition of him hereafter.

God forbid, that I should any longer prostitute, neglect, or make little account of that part of my self, which is so Spiritual in its Nature, which the Great, Holy, and Munificent God hath endued with such Powers, and already advanc'd to such Dignity.

nity! which may be improved, and aſcend in this World to ſuch Honour and Eminency, and is capable of inheriting ſuch Glorious and incomprehenſible Recompences in the next World! If I be regardleſs of ſuch a Soul, and yet vehemently purſue, and inordinately prize a few empty Trifles, ſome lying Vanities, what ſhall I alledge to excuſe my ſelf? Muſt I not be Self-condemned? Will not all the Ranks and Orders of Beings Condemn me? With what Confuſion muſt my Face be covered? May not the whole Syſtem of Nature Tremble, be Aſhamed, and Bluſh at ſuch a Proſpect, to have a view of a Rational Creature, one that hath ſo capacious a Soul, and yet more ſtupid and blockiſh than its moſt ſullen and dreggy Part? Lord, let not ſuch Shame be my Portion! Let me never fall into, nor ſink under ſuch Guilt! What! ſhall I be voluntarily cruel to, ſhall I hate and ſo diſhonour the nobleſt part of my Self? Shall I willfully caſt away my Soul, which if I take a due care of, will in a little time mount above the Stars, and be ſettled in a State incomprehenſibly Joyous, and full of Glory? No, I will now awake and rouſe up all my Powers and Strength, and tho I cannot exactly underſtand the worth of my Soul, no more than I can what it

it is; yet I will endeavour to be as juſt to it as poſſibly I can; I will prefer it above all the Objects of Senſe, above every thing that Time diminiſhes! above every thing that hath either Vexation, or Vanity inſcribed upon it! And I will do all I can in a firm dependance on Divine Grace, that this Soul of mine may aſſuredly arrive at the full Fruition of all thoſe great and bleſſed things which are laid up in ſtore for truly pious and devout, vertuous and upright, ſanctified and religious Souls.

What raiſed thoughts ſhould I have of a Soul, that is not liable to the Shocks and Violences to which my Body is every Hour ſubject! A Soul that cannot be at all impared by any of thoſe rude Aſſaults, which may Surprize, and which may unexpectedly and irreſiſtibly hurry my Earthly part to Duſt! Our Souls will endure for ever, let all Created Powers do what they can againſt them. They do not yield, they are not ſubject to the Alterations which are incident to what is is Mortal. They are Immortal, they cannot Die, but when their *Houſes of Clay* are Diſſolved, they paſs and enter into a State more ſuitable to their Spiritual Nature. They will retain their Beings, Powers and Properties, after that the Worms have glutted themſelves with

our

our Fleſh and Humors, after that our Bodies have paſt through all the Changes, to which ſuch Matter is liable.

If I believe my Soul is Immortal, what a value muſt I ſet upon it? We prize any thing of worth much the more, if it will be of long continuance. How ſhould I then eſteem a Soul, which will abide for ever! What Reaſons can I produce for my having beeen ſo intent upon the acquiring, and ſo induſtrious and unwearied to obtain things which cannot Satisfie, which may ſoon Fade, and which muſt certainly Periſh? Miſguided, fooliſh and infatuated Wretch! O how do I now bewail my Folly and my Wickedneſs! who have ſo vainly, yea, ſo impiouſly abus'd my ſelf, miſimployed my Strength, and ſquandred away my precious time! Away, you gilded, falſe, you mask'd diſguis'd Temptations! Be gone you empty lying treacherous Pleaſures of Senſe! You have already cheated and deceived me too long! You have robb'd, abus'd and wrong'd me hitherto! You can never repair the damage you have done me! I now with all Solemnity renounce and caſt you off! I am reſolv'd through Grace to deſpiſe, contemn and vilifie you all I can, and to have no more to do with you whilſt I Live! What relation can you pretend to a Soul, which will

will continue, live and act, through all the long and undeterminable duration of Eternity! I will not any more allow you the Service of a Thought! I loath and deteſt you! I earneſtly deſire and pray, that as long as I am on Earth, my Heart may be fill'd with an inſuperable Indignation againſt you all, and againſt every thing that cannot be improved to the benefit and advantage of my Immortal Soul! Should I be careleſs of my Soul any longer, now that *Life and Immortality are brought to light by the Goſpel*, which Goſpel I am favoured with for the guiding and directing of my Heart and Life, I ſhould not only be altogether inexcuſable, but the very Heathens will riſe up in Judgment againſt me, to my greater and more terrible Condemnation! 'Tis ſaid of *Pythagoras*, that when he heard of the Immortality of the Soul, He preſently gave off that diligent attendance to his Body, to which he had addicted himſelf, and made it his buſineſs to improve in Knowledge and Vertue. How much more ſhould I value and endeavour by all means to improve my Soul, who behold and diſcern this Truth in a much clearer Light, than he could? How do I Bluſh! and with what Grief and Revenge is my Heart rent, becauſe of the folly and vanity, the wickedneſs

edneſs of the paſt part of my Life; becauſe of my unthankfulneſs for the Goſpel, and careleſneſs of my Soul, to this time, when I read what a *Mahometan* King is reported to have cauſed to be writ on the Gates of his Pleaſure-Houſe, *viz. This World will not continue long; its Pride and Luſtre will ſoon be gone. Remember Brother, and apply thy Heart to Him, who only intended this World for our Inn. Let not thy Life be united to this Bitter Sweet, for it hath Cheated many; firſt Feſted with them, and afterwards Slaughtered them. If thy Soul can but come away from her Priſon Pure and Undefiled, and reach the Mark, it's no great matter whether thou Dieſt on a Throne, or on a Dung-hill.* O how Sottiſh have I been in ſetting the Riches, Pleaſures, Honors and Accommodations of this preſent World, at ſo high a Rate, preferring them before my Precious Soul! And ſhall I ſtill continue to do ſo? Let ſo tremendous Folly, ſuch deſperate Madneſs, be far from me: My own experience doth now convince me, that the more I have admired, the more I have toiled for theſe things, the emptier I am; the more I am diſappointed, the further I am from being ſatisfied! I am ſure theſe things are vain, yea, and vexatious too! They will fade and Periſh, and are at beſt, but of a ſhort duration! What are theſe, and ſuch brittle decaying, ſhort-liv'd Enjoyments, to

a Soul, which will abide and Live for ever! Were it not for the levity and ſicklineſs of my mind, what thouſands of conſiderations would croud in, to convince and certifie me, that it is my Soul, which of all other things, is of greateſt Worth? And can there be a more prodigious Folly, a groſſer contradiction, than for a Man to believe, his Soul is Immortal, and of greater value, than his Imagination can extend unto, and yet be regardleſs of it!

As to other things which are of value, but which we do not exactly underſtand, we uſually them eſteem according as they are better skill'd in them, than we are. Will any diſcreet and prudent Perſon throw away a Medal, a Jewel, or Precious-ſtone, or part with it for a Counter, a piece of Lead, or any ſuch thing, becauſe he doth not know its juſt worth? Or will he not rather enquire of ſome one who underſtands ſuch things, and then eſteem and prize it, at therate he aſſures him it is really worth? Now we have no reaſon at all to queſtion, but God who Created our Souls, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who Redeemed and Purchaſed them, do very well underſtond their worth. And by whoſe determination ſhould we govern our our ſelves in this Affair, but by theirs whoſe Judgment is moſt aſſuredly

redly Infallible? And if we will acquieſce in their Judgment in the Caſe, we muſt certainly eſteem our Souls exceeding precious. For if our Souls were not exceeding precious, the Eternal Father would not have given his Son to purchaſe them; nor would the only Begotten of the Father have laid down his Life for their Ranſom. Had they judged our Souls ſuch frivolous worthleſs things, as we generally appear to eſteem them, they would not have been redeemed at all; or if they muſt have been Purchaſed, it would have been with a Price of infinitely leſs Value, than the Blood of him who was the Son of God. The moſt that could have been demanded for them, would have been but a very moderate ſum of that, with which we buy the neceſſaries for our Temporal Life. For what poor and trifling things in this World, do People ordinarily pawn and venture their Souls? But God and Chriſt, had other thoughts of our Souls than we have. Tho we expoſe our Souls for nought, yet if any one Man could purchaſe the whole World, with the loſs of his Soul, he would be no Gainer, yea, his loſs would be Irreparable. *What ſhall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?* Matt. 16. 26. O! the ineſtimable price that was paid for theſe Souls, which we do ſo neglect, ſlight, and diſregard!

diſregard! *Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as Silver and Gold, but with the precious Blood of Chriſt, as of a Lamb without Blemiſh, and without Spot,* 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. When my thoughts concerning Reaſonable Souls, have mounted as high as ever they can, and when my eſteem of them has followed my Thoughts as cloſe as poſſible, how far am I from comprehending, and being throughly affected with their full worth? Alas! what are my moſt elevated apprehenſions to the incomprehenſible excellency and merit of that Blood with which they were bought? Wo is me! who have too long neglected and been careleſs of my unaccountably precious Soul, as if it had been the only frivolous, uſeleſs thing in the whole World! If I do any longer make but little account of this Soul of mine, I ſhall be unavoidably chargeable with an affected undervaluing what is in it ſelf of unconceivable worth, and trampling under foot moſt ungratefully the precious Blood of the everlaſting Covenant, and offering the moſt inſufferable contumely to the Lord of Glory, who gave himſelf a Ranſom for my Soul! Can I ſuſtain ſo great a load? Dare I willfully caſt away my Soul, to give the greated demonſtration of Ingratitude, and of ſullen Contempt unto Almighty God? Shall

I be ſo peeviſh, ſo malicious, ſo revengeful, as to deſtroy my Soul, and ſink my ſelf under the moſt horrid Guilt, becauſe my Saviour's Love was ſo ſtupendous and amazing! Wretch that I am! in that I have till now been ſo unmindful of my Soul, which coſt my *Jeſus* ſo dear! My deareſt *Jeſus*, thy Love doth now conſtrain me! Methinks I hear thy Sobs, thy Groans, the Prayers and Supplications, which thou didſt offer with ſtrong Crying and Tears! Thy earneſt Expoſtulation on the Croſs, when Dying, to Redeem this Soul! My Heart is pierced now! I muſt! I Grieve! I Mourn! My Indignation now is kindled! I deſpiſe! I hate! I loath whatever would defraud thee of thy Purchaſe! The Beauty, Grandeur, Pomp and Glory of this World, is now as nothing unto me! I neither love, nor prize, nor value any thing but my Soul, and as it's ranſomed by thy Blood! O! what ſhall I do, that I may attain to prize my Soul as it deſerves! This, this Soul which coſt the Son of God ſo dear! May I be duly affected with the Travail of my Saviour's Soul, and with the horrors of his Agonies and Death! Let me ever with becoming Adoration, meditate on, rightly underſtand, and conſtantly retain a lively, affectionate, powerful, conſtraining ſenſe on my Heart and Spirit

Spirit, of Chriſt's profoundeſt Condeſcention and ſuperlative Grace and Kindneſs! Would Chriſt dwell in my Heart by Faith, and might I be enabled to comprehend with all Saints, the breadth and length, and depth and height of his Love, how ſhould I abound in Admiring, Praiſing, Glorifying, and giving Thanks unto him! and to what a height would this ſort of exerciſe raiſe my eſtimation of my Soul, towards which, this great, this glorious, this beneficent and moſt gracious Saviour, hath manifeſted a Love, which paſſeth Knowledge.

As the beſt and greateſt Friend to Mankind hath in ſo ſtupendous a manner, Teſtified his love to, and thereby the real and extraordinary worth of Souls, ſo the moſt envious inveterate and malicious Enemy to Human Race, hath mightily fortified this Truth, That the Soul of Man is exceeding precious, by his indefatigable and unwearied attempts, to deſtroy our Souls, both in the ways of Subtilty, and Violence. We commonly acknowledge and bouldly affirm, the Devil is our great Adverſary, and then we muſt likewiſe allow and grant, that he deſigns to do us the greateſt Miſchief; and what can that be, but to prejudice and ruine that part of us which is undoubtedly of greateſt value? And can any thing be more apparent

apparent and manifeſt, than that all his methods and aſſaults are levelled againſt our Souls? What a Monſter ſhall I appear, if I make little or no account of this Soul, for the ranſoming of which, the eternal Son of God laid down his moſt precious Life! And for the ruining of which, the Devil doth not ſpare any either of his Craft and Artifice, or of his Strength and Induſtry? Would the Prince of the Powers of the Air, ſo ſedulouſly contrive and plot, be ſo very obſervant, and conſtant upon his Watch, make ſuch diligent Search after, and take ſo much pains as he doth to deſtroy our Souls, if they were ſuch inconſiderable worthleſs Trifles, as we ſeem to reckon them?

We are careful of, and do look accurately after thoſe thoſe things we really prize, and of which we make a very great account. And were we truly ſenſible of, and duly affected with the worth, the excellency, the precioufneſs of our own Souls, O! with what ſeriouſneſs ſhould we buſie our ſelves to ſecure their Salvation?

Secondly, Salvation is an ineſtimable Mercy and Privilege. Salvation! What a ſweet delicious good word is this? Take all the Letters in the World, and join them together how you pleaſe, you cannot frame a word,

word, that makes ſo comfortable and charming a Sound as this does! Of all the expreſſions that can be named, this is the moſt proper, and the beſt accommodated to our State and Circumſtances, to our Caſe and Neceſſities! We are in Miſery, our wants and dangers are greater than our Lips can utter! Who ſo wretched and forlorn as Sinners and guilty Perſons? None certainly excepting them whoſe Condemnation is already Seal'd and ratified! May ſuch as we be Saved! is it poſſible for us to obtain Salvation? May our aggravated Tranſgreſſions, the horrible Rebellion we have ſo long and ſo obſtinately perſiſted in againſt the Holy God, be Pardoned! May we yet eſcape the terrible wrath that is coming apace upon the Wicked and Diſobedient! Is the door of Mercy ſtill open? May we yet be received into favour! Moſt joyful tidings! moſt comfortable and raviſhing News! 'Bleſſ' be my Rock, Exalted be the God of my 'Salvation! Praiſe the Lord, O my Soul! 'and let all that is within me, magnifie his 'Holy Name! Thy loving kindneſs is bet'ter than Life! O Lord! I will praiſe thee 'as long as I Live! Let all the Angels of 'God, which excel in ſtrength, bleſs him! 'Yea, let all his works in all Places of his 'Dominion, bleſs him! Bleſs the Lord, O

'my

'my Soul! Oh that Men would praiſe the 'Lord for his Goodneſs and for his wonder-'ful Works to the Children of Men! Bleſſed 'be the Lord God of *Iſrael*, from Everla-'ſting, to Everlaſting, and let all the Peo-'ple ſay, *Amen.* Praiſe ye the Lord! This 'is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all ac-'ceptation, That Chriſt Jeſus came into the 'World to ſave Sinners, of whom we may 'juſtly repute our ſelves the greateſt! Let that Meſſage brought from Heaven by an Angel, (A Meſſage every way worthy of ſuch a Meſſenger) be the chief ſubject of my Meditations! And Oh that I might never think of it, but with a Heart rightly affected towards it! powerfully influenced by it, and mightily enlarged in thankfulneſs and praiſe for it! *Fear not, for behold, I bring you good Tydings of great Joy, which ſhall be to all People; for unto you is Born this day in the City of* David, *a Saviour, which is Chriſt the Lord,* Luke 2. 10, 11.

This Salvation, is indeed a great and bleſſed word, but how little do we know of that which it imports? No created Being can comprehend, and fully underſtand the Mercy, Good, and Privilege it ſignifies. A Bleſſing is the leſs by its being ſuch, that any finite Being can reach and know its full Dimenſions. This is a Mercy and Benefit, which

which deſerves our loudeſt Praiſes, our moſt ſolemn Acknowledgments, and our ſilent Admiration. We cannot poſſibly raiſe our eſtimation to its real Value: It is ſo great, the loftieſt Expreſſions fall infinitely ſhort of conveying to our Minds an adequate and exact conception of it. *How ſhall we then eſcape, if we neglect ſo great Salvation?* Heb. 2. 3. Our deliverances are incompleat whilſt we are on Earth; we are encompaſſed and ſurrounded here, with ſuch variety of dangers, calamities and troubles, we are no ſooner reſcued out of one, but we feel our ſelves Arreſted by another Diſaſter, and are in all reſpects as uneaſie and diſſatisfied till freed from this, as we were when mourning under the former. Yea, many times our very Deliverance proves but a ſtep to a Relapſe, which ſinks us deeper into the very ſame kind of Trouble and Diſquietment we thought we had eſcaped. We are *Born to Trouble, as the Sparks fly upward.* When one afflicting occurrence having gorg'd it ſelf, as we conceive, leaves us, we preſently become a Booty to another, or elſe the former returns with greater eagerneſs, and preys on us with more unſatiable greedineſs and violence. No ſooner have we one Deliverance, but we find we do as much need another. We

are not ſure but whole Troops of Sorrows will ſeize on us, and theſe ſo thick and cloſe one after another, they will not afford us one pleaſant Interval. Our Lives are at beſt chequered; and our Deliverances in this World, yield not a ſatisfaction of any long continuance. But bleſſed be God, the Lord Jeſus *being made perfect, is become the Author of eternal Salvation, unto all them that obey him*, Heb. 5. 9. O! the bleſſedneſs of them who partake of this Salvation! who are perfectly freed from every thing that can offend and moleſt! from the worſt of Evils, Sin, and the next *Temptations to it*, and from all the Sufferings, Pains, Diſeaſes, Doubts and Fears, which here extort our Tears, Complaints, and Moans! *God ſhall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes, and there ſhall be no more Death, neither Sorrow, nor Crying, neither ſhall there be any more Pain, for the former things are paſſed away*, Rev. 21. 4. How happy are they who are ſafe from, and out of the reach of all thoſe Torment, and Curſes, to which Sin doth expoſe People, and under which others muſt eternally roar! who, whilſt others fry in unquenchable Flames, and muſt be always toſt on the Waves and Surges of the ever burning Lake, endure none of their Anguiſh, but are filled with a Joy which no Tongue can relate!

relate! O the Honor to which they are advanced! the Glory with which they are Crowned! the Treaſures they enjoy! the Kingdoms they have received, the Delights with which they are, and will be everlaſtingly entertained! Our Underſtandings and Minds are not capacious and wide enough to comprehend, or conceive the great and excellent things that are conferred on them! *Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, neither have entred into the Heart of Man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him,* 1 Cor. 2. 9. *Beloved, now are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be; but we know, that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is,* 1 Joh. 3. 2. *In thy preſence is fulneſs of Joy, at thy right Hand are Pleaſures for ever more,* Pſal. 16. 11. *As for me, I will behold thy Face in Righteouſneſs; I ſhall be ſatisfied when I awake, with thy Likeneſs,* Pſal. 17. 15. *Becauſe thy loving Kindneſs is better than Life, my Lips ſhall praiſe thee. Thus will I praiſe thee while I Live; I will lift up my Hands in thy Name. My Soul ſhall be ſatisfied as with Marrow and Fatneſs, and my Mouth ſhall praiſe thee with joyful Lips,* Pſal. 63. 3, 4, 5.

Can any thing be ſo deſirable to me, as when I die, to have my precious Soul

guarded and conveyed by holy and bleſſed Angels, through the airy Regions unto *Abraham's* Boſom, into the kindeſt Embraces of the holy amiable, and loving Jeſus! And at the general Reſurrection, to have my Body raiſed Incorruptible and Glorious, and every way diſpoſed for, and united to its happy Soul, that they may be joint and eternal ſharers in all thoſe bleſſed Fruitions infinite Grace and Love will vouchſafe! How happy ſhall I be if through Grace I arrive to be for ever with Chriſt! What a glorious Change will then be wrought on me! How wonderfully will all the Powers and Faculties of my Soul, be advanced, improved, and enlarged! How much more beautiful and capacious will they be made than now they are? O the alteration that ſhall be made on me, to my unconceivable Advantage! when I ſhall *ſhine as the Brightneſs of the Firmament, as the Stars for Ever and Ever*, Dan. 12. 3. Yea, *as the Sun in the Kingdom of my Father*, Mat. 13. 43. When this *vile Body ſhall be Changed, and faſhioned like unto the Glorious Body of My Saviour, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, according to the working, whereby he is able even to ſubdue all things unto himſelf*, Phil. 3. 21. What account ſhould I make of ſuch a Privilege, Honor and Felicity! How ſhould I prepare, wait and

and long for this Great, Holy, and Glorious Change!

The word of that God, who is faithful and true, and cannot Lie, affords us evident and full assurance, that such a glorious and everlastingly happy State is prepared, and may be obtained, and it likewise certifies what manner of People they must be who shall be admitted to it. The Lord Jesus the supream Judge of, and great King over all, will at the last Day, say unto them on his right Hand, *Come ye blessed of my Father, Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, from the Foundation of the World*, Matt. 25. 34. *He will render to every Man according to his deeds; to them who by patient continuance in Well-doing, seek for Glory and Honor, and Immortality, Eternal Life*, Rom. 2. 6, 7. *Henceforth* (saith St. *Paul*) *there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also who love his appearing*, 2 Tim. 4. 8. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant Mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead, to an Inheritance Incorruptible and Undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God, through Faith unto*

Salvation, ready to be Revealed in the laſt Time, 1 Pet. 1. 3, 4, 5.

This Salvation comprehends all that is Great, all that is Honorable, all that is truly Delighting, Good and Deſirable. O that we may all duly ſtrive, labour, deſire and long to be prepared for, and brought to the actual poſſeſſion of it! What ſhould we wiſh for on our own behalves, if we have any love for our ſelves, but that God himſelf, the only ſatisfying good, would be our Portion! That we may have free, Intimate, full and everlaſting Communion in the higheſt Heavens, with the *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with glorious Angels and all the Saints above! That we may come to the City of the living God, the Heavenly* Jeruſalem, *and to an innumerable company of Angels, to the general Aſſembly and Church of the firſt Born, which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect, and to Jeſus the Mediator of the new Covenant, and to the Blood of ſprinkling that ſpeaketh better things than that of* Abel, Heb. 12. 22, &c. Can we deſire and pant after any thing comparable to our beholding our Saviour's Glory, and being for ever with him in his Kingdom, where he Reigns in Glory?

Were

Were we throughly perſwaded of, and did we in any meaſure eſteem this Salvation as we ought, (for indeed we cannot prize it as it deſerves) what an happy Change ſhould we preſently perceive in our ſelves! What a mighty power and efficacy ſhould we feel it have on our Souls! What a ſweet and conſtraining influence ſhould we find it ſhed abroad in our Hearts and Lives! How ſtrangely would it abate and take off our love and affection to this World! Its Pomps! its Pleaſures! its Vanities! How much would it raiſe us above the Flatteries which have hitherto Deluded us! How would it make us deſpiſe and contemn the painted Glories, and empty Enjoyments, which we have ſo unweariedly purſued, and ſo paſſionately courted! How indifferent ſhould we be to Earthly things, and how little impreſſion would any Worldly Allurements make on us, if we did ſteadily *look, not at the things which are ſeen, but at the things which are not ſeen,* 2 Cor. 4. 18. And did we affectionately conſider, that *the things which are ſeen are Temporal, but the things which are not ſeen, are Eternal!* How would this engage us to, animate us in, and with what ſucceſs and vigor would it carry us through all our Duties! Would not our Converſation be in Heaven, did we

ſeriouſly look for our Saviour, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt from thence, to call and take us along with him thither! *I preſs toward the the Mark for the Price of the high Calling of God in* Chriſt Jeſus, *if by any means I might attain unto the Reſurrection of the Dead.* What ſupport would this yield us? With what patience would this poſſeſs our Souls? Yea, with what joy would this fill us in the greateſt Tribulations, Diſtreſſes and Perſecutions, we can poſſibly have occaſion to encounter in our paſſage toward it? *We glory in the Tribulations alſo,* Rom. 5. 3. *For which cauſe we faint not; but tho our outward Man periſh, the inward Man is renewed day by day; for our light affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory,* 2 Cor. 4. 16, 17. *I reckon that the Sufferings of this preſent time, are not worthy to be compared with the Glory which ſhall be revealed in us,* Rom. 8. 18. We read of thoſe (Heb. 10. 24) who *took joyfully the ſpoiling of their Goods, knowing in themſelves, that they had in Heaven a better, and an enduring Subſtance.* Yea, how would this reconcile us to leave the World quite! make us earneſtly deſire to Die, and that the time may haſten apace, when we may actually give up the Ghoſt, and reſign up our Spirits to Chriſt! *Having a deſire to depart,*

part, and to be with Chriſt, *which is far better*, Phil. 1. 23.

Who can conceive the thouſandth, yea, the leaſt part of the Happineſs of the Spirits of Juſt Men made Perfect! With what knowledge, admiration and love, ſhall we be filled, when we are ſetled *yonder*, in thoſe bright and ſhining *Thrones!* when we are joined to the *Heavenly Choir*, and bear our part in the *eternal Halelujahs!* and ſhall be aſcribing Honor, Glory and Praiſe to him that ſitteth on Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever! With what raptures of Love, Praiſe and Joy, ſhall we be everlaſtingly entertained, when we become Denizens of that glorious City, of which the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb is the Temple! where we ſhall ſee his Face, and have his Name in our Fore-heads! where there ſhall be no Night! where we ſhall need no Candle, neither light of the Sun, for the Lord God will give us Light, and we ſhall reign for ever and ever.

How incomprehenſibly great and good are the things which God hath in ſtore for them who heartily love and ſincerely ſerve him! ſeeing God will be pleaſed to admit ſuch frail imperfect Mortals as we are, to the full fruition of himſelf and his Chriſt; ſurely there is nothing can deſerve to be

eſteemed and called Bleſſedneſs, but only this. How can I prize and value, how can I affect, ſtrive and long for any thing but this Salvation alone! How am I tranſported with admiration and wonder! yet theſe do fail me! they flag, they cannot mount high enough by thouſands of Degrees! Salvation is ſo tranſcendent! O let my Love increaſe, grow ripe, aſcend ſtill higher and higher! How would the Damned value this Salvation, might they have but the leaſt hopes of ever being admitted to it? What eſteem have the Saints above for it? Yea, how do ſincere Believers here prize it, eſpecially when they have a lively vigorous ſenſe of it? St. *Paul* was poſitive, that to Die would be his Gain, *Phil* 1. 21. *Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better Reſurrection,* Heb. 11. 35.

O my ſtupid ſenſeleſs Soul! what ails thee, that thou ſtill lieſt grovelling here! that thy motion is ſo ſlow! O! for the ſtrongeſt and moſt ſeraphick flights of Love! for the Extaſies of Paſſion now! What, art thou bereaved of all thy Powers! Haſt thou loſt thy Nature? Art thou Metamorphos'd and chang'd into a lifeleſs lump of Matter? Rouze and awake! exert and put forth all thy Strength! Tho hitherto thou haſt been deceived by Objects much too little and unſatis-

unſatisfying, here's that which calls for all thy Love, thy Zeal, thy Life! Here is Salvation, which much exceeds thy moſt extended thoughts, and reach! Here's that which none could ever eſteem according to the fulneſs of its worth; the moſt glittering ſplendid, worldly Triumphs, are at beſt but poor, deceitful, treacherous and inſipid Vanities! all the Grandeur, Pomp and Glories here, do ſoon decay and wither; do quickly dwindle into nothing! but this Salvation is truly great and Glorious; it is ſubſtantial, durable and ſatisfying.

Moſt holy, true and bleſſed *Jeſus!* thou haſt expreſly told us, that in thy Father's Houſe there are many Manſions, *Joh.* 14. 2. 3. That thou art gone to prepare a place for thy faithful People! And that thou wilt come again and receive them unto thy Self! that where thou art, there they may be alſo! Thou Prayedſt for them with moſt tender and earneſt Affection, when thou waſt here! And it is thy will and pleaſure, that thy Saints and Servants, thoſe whom the Father hath given thee, ſhall be with thee, where thou art, that they may behold thy Glory, *Matt.* 17. 24. Thou doſt not enjoin them any thing in order to their being Saved, but what thou wilt enable them by thy Spirit to perform! Nor any thing but

what

what thou can'ſt make pleaſing and delightful to them, by the abundance of thy Grace! O Lord, I here abſolutely reſign my ſelf to be guided by thy Counſel; afterwards receive me to Glory! Whom have I in Heaven but thee? There is none upon Earth I can deſire beſides thee! Be thou the ſtrength and the joy of my Heart, and my portion for ever! There is not any thing comparable to thy Salvation! Lord, take from me what thou wilt! make me Poor and needy! let me be Scorned and Deſpiſed! let my Body be Sick, and every part and Joynt of it, Sore and in Pain! let me be afflicted and Perſecuted! yea, do with me what thou wilt, ſo that thou wilt grant that Grace and Peace may be multiplied to me at preſent, through the knowledge of thy ſelf; ſo that thou wilt be pleaſed, that I may at laſt obtain the end of my Faith and Hope, the Salvation of my Soul!

Thirdly, No Perſon can with reaſon expect, or hope his Soul ſhall be Saved, who is not reſolvedly diligent in that courſe God hath ordained and preſcribed him for this purpoſe. That cuſtomary, ſlight, and formal courſe, with which too many content themſelves, will not ſuffice to ſecure their Salvation. The beſt have too much reaſon to complain of themſelves, becauſe they

are

are so supine, remiss and careless, about a business of so great importance in it self, and unto which, the Holy and most Righteous God requires all should give a diligenr Attendance. This is the *one Thing necessary*, which must be minded with the greatest seriousness, whatever is Neglected. All other Affairs and Businesses, must give place to this, if at any time they happen to interfere with it. A few accidental thoughts of, some flitting unconstant desires after Salvation; a customary observation of some of the outward parts of Devotion; an over-vehement heat for particular Modes of Worship, speculative Opinions, and doubtful Practices, will not avail any Man unto Salvation, but will render his Case much more dangerous, if the main bent of his Heart and Affections, is after his Covetousness, his worldly and fleshly Lusts, if his Life is blemished and polluted with practices diametrically opposite to the power, essence and design of all true Religion.

If we will secure the Salvation of our Souls, we must have, and cherish a composedness, and seriousness of Spirit, in some measure suitable to the Nature, Excellency, and Weightiness of that we propound to our selves. We must attend to, and industriously prosecute that course of Life and Practice,

Practice, which hath ſome affinity with, and bears ſome proportion to what we aim at. We muſt be reſolvedly diligent in the uſe of thoſe Means God hath inſtituted for the furthering of us in it. And if we refuſe to walk in his way, and follow the method he hath directed us to, our Hope will certainly fail us, and we ſhall be utterly without Excuſe.

Salvation is not to be attained ſo eaſily as multitudes dream it is, and as too many are enclined to flatter People it is. All would be Saved, and the greateſt part would fain be ſaved in a way very little inconvenient, and contradictory to their ſenual Luſts and Intereſts, and then do too readily perſwade themſelves they may be Saved in ſuch a way as is agreeable enough to their own extravagant Humours; in ſuch a way as they would like beſt, and would pitch upon, if they were to appoint the way themſelves. It is a great unhappineſs, that the Chriſtian World hath been ſo long troubled with a ſort of Perſons, who pretending they have a right to inſtruct others in the way to Heaven and Salvation, have contributed very much both by their Diſcourſes and Practices, to reconcile the profeſſion of Chriſtianity to Men's Ungodly Luſts, rather than to reconcile them they have pretended to take

take care of, unto the truth and practice of that Religion they profeſſed, whoſe way to Salvation ſeems every jot as broad as that our Bleſſed Saviour cautioned People againſt, aſſuring them, it would lead unto Deſtruction: Such Perſons may juſtly be reputed *Factors* for the *Prince of Darkneſs*, rather than *Ambaſſadors* and *Miniſters* of that Sacred and Divine Perſon, who came *to deſtroy the works of the Devil*, and to ſave his People from their Sins. Great Reſolution and vigorous conſtant Diligence muſt be uſed by us, in order to Salvation, let Flattering Soul-deſtroyers ſay what they pleaſe to the contrary.

If we will be Saved and enter into Life, we muſt keep God's Commandments; we muſt mortifie our Luſts, be crucified to the World, and have the World crucified to us; we muſt deny our ſelves, and walk in a way contrary to thoſe of this World, who do lye in Wickedneſs, and are governed by that Spirit, which ruleth in the Children of Diſobedience. We muſt expect to meet with Difficulties and Oppoſitions, and muſt reſolvedly through Divine aſſiſtance, encounter and vanquiſh them all. We muſt have Grace, and act it ſtrenuouſly and with great ſerioufneſs and conſtancy, uſe appointed Means for the ſtrengthning, encreaſing and confirming of our Graces; and

and perſeveringly ſtrive to improve and grow more and more in Knowledge, Faith, Hope, Love, and in all the parts of a truly Godly and Religious Life.

He who is the Author of eternal Salvation, the only Saviour of Sinners, did not acquaint them he loved moſt, with any other way to Salvation, but Repenting throughly of Sin, believing in Him, obeying his Laws, and following his Example. He did not give any Indulgence to Peoples Luſts, nor did he countenance their Sloth. He peremptorily required them to *ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait Gate*, Luke, 13. 24. He is poſitive, that *except your Righteouſneſs exceed the Righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, you ſhall in no wiſe enter into the Kingdom of God*, Matt. 5. 20. He ſaith, *The Kingdom of Heaven ſuffereth Violence, and the Violent take it by force*, Matt. 11. 12. Yea, he warns us againſt cheating our ſelves with falſe and groundleſs eaſy hopes; and aſſures us with great earneſtneſs and much ſolemnity, that we will find our ſelves miſtaken and deceived, if we think to inſiſt upon any ſpecious pretences at the laſt day, and will therefore content our ſelves with what falls ſhort of doing the Will of his Father which is is in Heaven. *Not every one that ſaith unto me, Lord, Lord, ſhall I enter in-*

to

to the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not Propheſied in thy Name? And in thy Name have caſt out Devils? And in thy Name done many wonderful Works? And then will I profeſs unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work Iniquity, Matt. 7. 21, 22, 23. His Apoſtles afterwards certified the People, they muſt *give diligence, to make their Calling and Election ſure, if they would be ſure not to miſcarry and fail,* 2 Pet. 1. 10. And that he is the *Author of eternal Salvation, only unto thoſe who do obey him,* Heb. 5. 9. With what ſhadow of Reaſon can you pretend to hope for Salvation, if you will not credit him and his Apoſtles, but continue regardleſs of what they have ſo vehemently affirmed indiſpenſibly neceſſary to your being *made meet to be partakers of the Inheritances of the Saints in Light?* Is it not moſt evident and plain, that the precious Promiſes pertain only unto them who approve themſelves reſolvedly diligent in eſchewing what is Evil, and *in perfecting of Holineſs in the fear of God,* 2 Cor. 7. 1. Is not this undoubtedly the great purport, the main deſign, and the principal buſineſs of the whole Goſpel, *viz.* To inſtruct, direct, oblige and aſſiſt us to *deny all Ungodlineſs*

and

and worldly Lusts, and to live Godly, Righteously, and Soberly in this present World, that we may be disposed for everlasting Salvation in the next World, *Tit.* 2. 11, 12. Was not this the course the Saints of Old took to make their Salvation sure? Was it not from their having conscienciously followed this Method, that they fetched their Evidences, to prove they had a right to hope and look for Savation? Was it not from this that they derived Comfort in their greatest Distresses, and looked with satisfaction and joy to hereafter, beyond time and days? *This is our rejoicing, the Testimony of our Consciences, that in Simplicity and Godly Sincerity, we have had our Conversation in the World*, &c. 2 Cor. 1. 12. *I have fought*, (said *St.* Paul) *a good Fight, I have finished my Course, I have kept the Faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge will give unto me at that day*, &c. 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8. Ought we not now to be followers of them, who through Faith and Patience, are Inheritors of the faithful Promises? Can any Man now pretend with any shew of Reason, to expect Salvation, so long as he continues Vicious and Immoral, Supercilious and Careless, Negligent and Slothful? Do you quit your selves like good Christians, whilst you presume

ſume on Salvation, in a way which is not conſiſtent with God's Commands? Whilſt you depend on what the Lord Jeſus hath aſſured you, will certainly fail you: Whilſt you have not one promiſe in all your Bible to countenance and ſupport your Hope: Whilſt the whole Doctrin of Salvation, the entire Goſpel of Chriſt is againſt you: Whilſt you keep and continue in a way directly contrary to that, in which all thoſe did walk who are already got to Heaven?

Fourthly, How juſtly may they be Expoſtulated with, and what keen Reproof do they deſerve who have been all their time regardleſs of the Salvation of their Souls? Indeed we are all faulty; we have been very defective and wanting; we have not done what we might, to further and make our own Salvation ſure. What reaſon have we all to be deeply Humbled, to ſmite upon our Breaſts, and cry out againſt our ſelves? Ah! miſerable and ill-deſerving Wretches! we are horribly guilty! God be Merciful unto us, who have been ſo careleſs of our own Salvation! How have we cumbered our ſelves, been careful and troubled about many needleſs and unprofitable Matters, and left the *one thing neceſſary* unheeded? How thoughtful and ſollicitous have we been

been about our Food and Apparel! What we ſhould Eat and Drink, and wherewith we ſhould be Cloathed! With what eager, vehement deſires and affections have we purſued the little Intereſts of this preſent World? With what unwearied pains have we laboured for very Vanities! And how have we all this while ſhamefully forgotten the holy God! ſlighted the moſt compaſſionate and loving Jeſus! not looked after, nor ſought for the Kingdom of Heaven, and that Righteouſneſs which prepares for, and leads us to it, with any tolerable Diligence and Concernedneſs! How have we neglected our eternal Salvation! We have not had a due regard to the ſafety and wellfare of our precious and Immortal Souls! the duties of Piety and offices of Religion, have either been wholly omitted by us, or elſe we have performed them in a very ſuperficial, cold and heartleſs manner! Who amongſt us all can vindicate and clear himſelf from this Charge, before that God who obſerves all our ways, knows our Hearts and tries our Reins? Or, what can we alledge and plead in our own Excuſe, if we have been by our own Confeſſion thus Guilty? Is it not highly reaſonable, and very fit we ſhould all ſtrive to acquire a true ſenſe of our own Guilt, and

accuſe

accuſe and condemn our ſelves? Cry importunately for Pardon and Mercy, immediately reſolve, and in a dependance on Divine aſſiſtance, preſently ſet upon a faithful and moſt vigorous Amendment? Sure it will become us to apply our ſelves ſpeedily, *To work out our Salvation with fear and trembling, and to give all diligence to make our Calling and Election ſure.*

And if thoſe who have made the greateſt proficiency in Religion, have ſo much occaſion to upbraid themſelves, and to acknowledge that they deſerve to have their Faces covered with Shame and Confuſion; If ſuch be ſcarcely ſaved, then what may be ſaid of others? Where ſhall the Wicked and Ungodly, the openly Vicious and Prophane, the Unrighteous and Unmerciful, the Luxurious and the Covetous, the Formaliſt and the Hypocrite appear?

All People are buſie and much concerned for ſomething or other. We are concerned much for our Bodies, for our Temporal Life, Health, and Happineſs, for our Eaſe, our Pleaſure, our Profits; for our Houſes, Lands, Cattle, Wares, Merchandize, *&c.* But how few are concerned half ſo much for their Souls and their Salvation, as they are for thoſe momentary, tranſient, and uncertain things? Yet every

every Man ought to be more concerned for the Salvation of his Soul, than for all other things. Sirs, reflect upon your ſelves, and with good deliberation conſider your State, and in what manner you have hitherto behaved your ſelves, and what is your Diſpoſition and Carriage? Do you not indulge your ſelves in your Luſts and vicious Courſes, tho you have been often admoniſhed and warned, and adviſed to the contrary? Are you not induſtrious and diligent in providing for, and fulfilling the Luſts of the Fleſh? Do you not conform your ſelves to the ſinful faſhions and cuſtoms of this evil World? Do you not live and perſiſt in thoſe practices you are convinced in your Conſciences, are diſallowed and condemned by him who will be your Judge, and which you have at leaſt pretended ſolemnly to Renounce? Are you not Enemies in your minds to the power of Godlineſs? Do you not make it appear by your practices, that you are not willing to be reconciled to a ſerious, gracious and heavenly courſe of Life? How can you pretend you are concerned for your Salvation, whilſt you obſtinately refuſe to walk in the only Way which leads unto it? Do you not make light of Chriſt? Are you not contentedly ignorant of the great Truths relating to his Perſon,

Perſon, his Natures and his Offices, or at leaſt of the practical Improvement you ſhould make of them? Do you not ſturdily reject his gracious Invitations, contemn his Authority, and refuſe to follow his Example? Does not the World and your Pleaſures carry away your Affections and Hearts from him? Do you not undervalue the Ordinances inſtituted in the Goſpel, and make little or no account of the means of Grace? Are you not altogether Heartleſs and Formal in, and careleſs in being made better by the uſe of them? Do you not ordinarily allow any thing to excuſe you from attending on God in them, tho God hath writ to you the great things of his Law, *Hoſ.* 8. 12. Do you not account them as a ſtrange thing? Are you not altogether unconcerned for the due and ſerious performance of the private duties of Religion? Do you not paſs over Days and Weeks, without examining your Hearts, and enquiring into your Practices and the State and condition of your Souls, without reading the word of God, ſo as to inform your ſelves thereby in his Mind, and quicken you to your Duties, without praying with ſuch a compoſedneſs of Spirit and affectionateneſs of Soul, as the nature of that Duty and your own Caſes call for? Do you

at

at all delight in ſerious religious ſpiritual Diſcourſe? Or, do you make any enquiries for your ſound Inſtruction and ſafe guidance in the way to Bleſſedneſs, and for your aſſiſtance towards Salvation? May you not eaſily convince your ſelves from theſe and the like Inſtances that you do not heartily concern your ſelves for, but are indeed regardleſs of the Salvation of your Souls? And, will you obſtinately continue ſo?

O! how extreamly dangerous is your Eſtate! How juſtly are you to be reproved, ſeeing you have paſs'd over ſo much of your time in a neglect of that which ſhould have been moſt deeply Imprinted on your Hearts, and ſhould have had the moſt powerful influence on your whole Practice! Your guilt is exceeding great, and you are abſolutely without Excuſe. You act againſt all the principles of Reaſon, and dictates of common Prudence. You run counter to your own Profeſſion. You tear in pieces your moſt ſolemn and ſacred Vows. You caſt contempt upon God himſelf, and affront, ſcorn, and teſtifie your ſpitefulneſs againſt the very Commiſeration and Love, the Bowels and Blood of his only Begotten Son. Inſtead of reaping advantage from the Death of Chriſt, you do your utmoſt

to

to Crucifie him afreſh. You do what you are able to put him to open Shame. You manifeſtly judge and declare your ſelves unworthy of Eternal Life. You deſtroy your own Hopes, and render the Patience and Mercy of God (other Peoples principal Support and Comfort on all occaſions) unconceivably Terrible and Frightful to your ſelves. You forfeit what you purſue, and you turn your preſent Poſſeſſions, into real Curſes: And when you Periſh everlaſtingly, you will have and inherit your own Choice. You muſt expect your Condemnation will be much more aggravated than other Peoples. How little a while can you enjoy the Riches, Pleaſures and Vanities, you prefer above your Souls, and their Salvation? And whether do you think you can fly for help and comfort, when God and Chriſt ſhall abandon you to the inſuperable laſhes and accuſations of your own guilty Conſciences? And to the never fading, but incomprehenſible Torments of a Damned State.

You profeſs you believe there is ſuch a bleſſed and glorious Eſtate to be obtained, as that is which the word of God doth give an account of: But you do not heartily believe what you would have the World believe you do. For were you really and

fully perſwaded of the truth, certainty and excellency of what God hath promiſed to the Faithful and Obedient, you would concern your ſelves in good earneſt, to get an intereſt in, and right unto the ſame. If you had a ſtrong and firm perſwaſion of thoſe things you would be throughly perſwaded, that the way God hath preſcribed, is not only ſuitable, but abſolutely neceſſary. You would be reconciled to follow that courſe of Life, he hath ordained for them to walk in, who ſhall inherit them. People do conſtantly act according to the predominancy of their Perſwaſion and Belief. Lord! What Multitudes who profeſs the Chriſtian Faith, are ruined by a ſecret, but predominant Unbelief! It is an evil Heart of Unbelief, that makes to depart from the living God, *Heb.* 3. 12.

You behave your ſelves in this Matter as if you were quite void of Reaſon. You are thoughtful enough in all other caſes, pretend to be prudent, will think and conſider, ponder and project how to manage your little Half-penny Affairs to your utmoſt Advantage, and would not by any means give People occaſion to ſuſpect you inconſiderate and weak, ſilly and indiſcreet in ordering your Worldly Buſineſs. But as to what concerns your Souls and Eternity; you

you live at random, as if theſe things were of no moment to you. Whereas, if you did but deliberately weigh your Actions *in the Ballance of the Sanctuary*, conſider what you have done, and what you are about to do, and whether your Practices are conſiſtent with, or have any relation to Salvation, it would be next to impoſſible that you ſhould continue ſo unmindful of, and perſiſt in a courſe of Practice ſo plainly contradictory and fatal to your higheſt Intereſts. Did you ſeriouſly conſider on your ways, you would ſoon perceive invincible Reaſons why you ſhould preſently alter your courſe, and betake your ſelves to a faithful and diligent obſerving of the Divine Teſtimonies, *Pſal.* 119. 59. An irreparable miſcarriage, admits of no Excuſe; yea, is horribly aggravated, when it appears to be the pure effect of voluntary Inconſideration. How exceedingly will it encreaſe a and heighten the torments of Damnation, when a Man ſhall be neceſſitated to accuſe himſelf, that he never conſidered what he did, nor would not think what he was to do, that he might be Saved?

What a groundleſs Confidence and deſperate Preſumption do you pleaſe your ſelves with, if you provide your ſelves other claims to Salvation, than God will approve

of? How come you to have reaſon to think you have enough to plead for your admiſſion into the Kingdom of God, becauſe you enjoy outward Privileges, and partake of Goſpel Ordinances, whilſt you caſt off all care, that theſe may have their proper effects on your Hearts and Lives, ſeeing our Saviour, Lord and Judge hath expreſly ſaid, *Many will ſay to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not Propheſied in thy Name? And in thy Name have caſt out Devils? And in thy Name done many wonderful Works? And then I will profeſs unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work Iniquity,* Mat. 7. 22, 23. Can a groſſer Dotage be imagined, than for People to live preſumptuouſly in evil Courſes, and yet buoy up themſelves with confident hopes of making amends for their tranſgreſſing of God's Laws, and of providing themſelves a ſafe paſſage to Heaven, when they can tarry no longer upon Earth, by ways of their own, or other Peoples deviſing? This was an Impoſture which prevailed amongſt the *Phariſees* of Old; it does obtain amongſt the Superſtitious in theſe days; it is the principal Fancy, which ſupports the rude, immoderate and unreaſonable Heat, People manifeſt for thoſe matters, of which we read not one Syllable in any of the Divine Oracles.

Oracles. O! the senseless delusions with which Multitudes willingly suffer themselves to be cheated! and this in a Business of the greatest Consequence imaginable! With what ease and readiness do men of ill Lives reconcile themselves to confident hopes of Salvation, perswading themselves, that by a few new-devised ways of Corporal Mortifications, and empty Abstinencies, some ritual Observances, or at most a pecuniary Indulgence, they shall make a very good Comutation for all their Immoralities, and purchase an easie Passport unto Glory?

Sirs! What reason can you alledge for your entertaining and hardning your selves in your vicious Courses with Diabolical suggestions? Why do you suffer your selves to be so tamely imposed on, by your grand Adversary the Devil? He does all he can to lead his Captives on smoothly, and without any suspicion, to that remediless Perdition, where he designs they should be everlastingly Lodged. When you please your selves that such seriousness of Spirit, such holiness of Life, such circumspect Walking as the faithful Ministers of the Gospel insist on, and commend to People, is not necessary to your being Saved: Is it not the Devil who doth furnish you with these Insinuations? When you plead the Goodness and

Mercy of God in expreſs contradiction to the whole tenor of his Word. Whence doth this illuſion ariſe but from your Minds being darkned with the Vapours and Steams which aſcend from the Bottomleſs Pit? Why will you ſo affront God, and abuſe his moſt Divine Excellencies, to diſguiſe the infernal Treachery of the Father of Lies, and great deſtroyer of Souls? Who but your moſt miſchievous Enemy can prompt you thus to pervert the Declarations of God's Goodneſs, to defeat the main intendment of the riches of his Grace? Can you exerciſe your Reaſon, can you Meditate and think in any degree, and yet believe you ſhall be able to vindicate your tenacious adhering to a Notion which Cancels all the Authority of God's Commands, deveſts him of his Truth and Faithfulneſs, and transforms his whole Revelation into a plain piece of Falſhod and Impoſture?

How wretchedly does Satan infatuate and befool you, when he perſwades you to put off your concerning your ſelves for the Salvation of your Souls, to *a more convenient Seaſon*? And prevails with you to ſtifle, efface and vanquiſh your preſent Convictions, by pretending you may do it with *a better Grace* hereafter; and that a riper and more mature Age, will be much more proper

per for, and agreeable to ſo Auſtere and Grave a Buſineſs? Whom do you gratifie in neglecting to mind your Salvation, but your worſt and moſt miſchievous Enemy? And will you humor him, when you cannot do it any other way, than by running the moſt Diſmal Risk, and rendring your Salvation at leaſt next to Impoſſible? Can any time be ſo convenient for this Work, as the preſent, ſeeing the preſent is the only Seaſon you can call your own? Seeing you are not ſure of more time to mind it in? Seeing the preſent Seaſon is the only time, wherein you can truly hope to attend it with good Succeſs? Are you ſo deſtitute of Reaſon and good Senſe, as not to perceive that if you allow Satan to have ſuch an aſcendent over you, as to wheedle you at this rate, he will drill you on ſo long, you will have no time at laſt to concern your ſelves for the Salvation of your Souls, to any purpoſe?

Sirs, what do you mean? What is your Purpoſe? What are you reſolved on? Sure you will not ſay, you fully determin to deſtroy thoſe precious Souls you are entruſted with, and make an Experiment, how much your abuſing Divine Patience, contemning infinite Mercy, and deſpiſing the Riches of God's Grace, will add to the

Horror and Anguiſh of the Damned. Oh! that you would ſeriouſly conſider of Matters, and *ſhew your ſelves Men*, yea, ſhew your ſelves what according to your Profeſſion you ſhould be, *Chriſtians*, before the *door of Hope* be quite ſhut; whilſt there remains a poſſibility of eſcaping that *Vengeance, and fiery Indignation, which ſhall devour the Adverſaries*! Do you think you are able to contend with the *Almighty?* Are you equal Matches for that God, who is a *Conſuming Fire?* Can you with calm and ſerene Minds, *dwell with Everlaſting Burnings?* Alas! how ſoon may God begin to write againſt you *Bitter things?* How ſoon can he throw your Conſciences into *Convulſions*, and wound your Souls, by cauſing the Invenomed Darts of his Fury to ſtick faſt in them? In what a caſe will you be, *When the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels, in flaming Fire, taking vengeance on them who know not God, and that obey not the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting Deſtruction, from the preſence of the Lord, and from the power of his Glory*, 2 Theſſ. 1. 7, 8, 9. What will you do, when the *Great and terrible day of the Lord ſhall come?* Whether will you then fly? How will you then be able to appear before, and look your incenſed Judge in

in the Face? What will you then plead for your ſelves? Where do you think to hide your ſelves? Rocks and Mountains cannot then conceal you! What can ſcreen you from irreſiſtible Power? How do you think you ſhall eſcape the effects of Impartial Juſtice? *Now conſider this, ye that forget God, leſt he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver*, Pſal. 50. 22.

But alas! how difficultly are ſuch People brought to conſider *the things which belong to their Peace?* What multitudes are there every where who have ſo habituated themſelves to neglect their Salvation, and to thoſe courſes which have the plaineſt tendency to ruin their Souls Everlaſtingly; they have hardned themſelves againſt all Reproof; whoſe Conſciences are ſo cauteriz'd, or ſeared, they can hear the moſt dreadful threatnings Recorded in the Word of God, and their Hearts not be moved or affected at all with them? yea, in expreſs defiance of thoſe Menaces, can *Bleſs themſelves in their Iniquities*. What ſo ſtrange and ſo amazing! as that People ſhould be in ſo forlorn a State, and yet will not be prevailed with by any means to take notice of it! They are ſenſible of Hunger, Cold, Sickneſs, any Corporal wants and pains, of troubleſome Times, worldly Loſſes, un-

reaſonable Weather, *&c.* But have no ſenſe of their ſpiritual Wants, and the great danger their Souls are in. Tho they are under the wrath of God, ſtand on the very brink of Hell, and are not certain of being one Hour out of unquenchable Flames, yet they are altogether unconcerned, can Eat and Drink and Sleep, and follow their Sports, and worldly Buſineſſes with Eagerneſs, as if they were in no danger, nor had any reaſon at all to be afraid. *There is a way that ſeemeth right unto a Man, but the end thereof are the ways of Death,* Prov. 14. 12. O that the carnally ſecure and preſumptuous would ponder, believe, and faithfully apply this Scripture to themſelves! I do not only pity multitudes of ignorant poor People, who mind nothing but a preſent Livelyhood, but a great many who live in pomp, have huge worldly Poſſeſſions, do fair Deliciouſly every day, beſtow the moſt of their thoughts, and the greateſt portions of their time, and their Wealth, upon their Bodies, which muſt in a little time be laid in the Grave, and at laſt, (unleſs they come to be of another Mind, and to alter their courſe in due time before they Die) together with their miſerable, guilty, neglected Souls, be Tormented in Hell Fire for ever.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, It is very fit and meet, that every one ſhould make a ſerious, ſtrict and impartial Enquiry into himſelf, whether he has been duly concerned for the Salvation of his own Soul, or have hitherto been regardleſs of, and neglected this moſt neceſſary and important Buſineſs? Let us ſpeedily ſet apart ſome portion of our time for this Work, and employ our calmeſt and moſt penetrating Thoughts in ſearching out the State and Condition of our Souls. In conſidering what we have been doing? Whether we are going? What will become of us, if we ſhould preſently be Summoned to appear before God's Tribunal? Whither we muſt be Sentenced to that unquenchable Fire, which is *prepared for the Devil and his Angels*, or to dwell with Chriſt in Glory? Whether we ſhall ſee the Face of God with Comfort and Joy, or have our Souls filled with Aſtoniſhment and Confuſion? Whether we ſhall hear thoſe joyful Words, *Well done thou good and faithful Servant*, or that terrible Thunder, *Depart thou Curſed, I know thee not thou wicked doer?* It doth behove us to enquire ſeriouſly, and to get ſpeedily a ſound knowledge of the Eſtate of our Souls, leſt Death and Hell ſhould ſurprize us; Death and Judgment are haſtning a pace, and it will be too late

to

to think of amending what is amiſs, and flying from Wrath, if we leave this World in an unreconciled Eſtate. Yet you have time and means, and encouragements and helps to diſcover the Truth of your Condition; yet you may prevent your eternal Miſery, if you have been unconcerned for your Souls; yet you may eſcape the Puniſhments you have deſerved, if you be truly ſenſible of your Sin, Guilt and danger, do humbly betake you unto Chriſt, reform your Lives, cloſe with the offers of Mercy, and lay hold of the Grace which is tendred.

You will ſay (it may be) you hope well, and you truſt that all will end well. But I pray you, what ground have you for that Hope and Truſt? Groundleſs Hope will not Save you. Such Hope is but Preſumption, it hath ruin'd Thouſands and Millions. Examin your ſelves therefore impartially, ſearch out what your Eſtate is, bring this matter to a full determinate Iſſue. Awake careleſs drowſie Soul! pleaſe not thy ſelf with fooliſh Dreams any longer! Lord of all Grace and Might! pour down thy gracious Influences! awake our drowſie, ſleepy, ſenſeleſs Conſciences, make us to attend to, and obey the word of Exhortation!

Hearken

Hearken every one, liſten to Advice, and improve the preſent Opportunity: Know that you are called on, exhorted and warned, and if you continue finally ſturdy and diſobedient, you will be without Excuſe. If you Periſh, your Blood will be required at your own Hands. Your Damnation will lye wholly upon your ſelves. Conſider therefore,

1. If you have been unconcerned all your time for your Souls and their Salvation, and are under the power of Sin and your Luſts, and in an unreconciled Eſtate, you are in a very evil and dangerous Eſtate. You have been pulling down inſupportable loads of Wrath upon your ſelves. If you perſiſt and die in this Eſtate, it will be impoſſible for any thing to interpoſe and ſcreen you from the terrible ſtrokes of divine Vengeance, or to ſupport and bear you up, under that mighty weight of Horror and Torment you have been hailing upon your Selves. What trembling of Heart, failing of Eyes, and ſorrow of Soul will then ſeize on you? Is this an eſtate to be deſired? Is this an Eſtate to ſleep and ſlumber and repoſe your ſelves quietly in?

2. This was your Eſtate once. We are all naturally concluded under Sin and Guilt. *Children of Wrath, dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins*; without

without Holineſs, unconcerned for our Souls, Enemies to God, and obnoxious unto his Diſpleaſure. And every Man continues in this evil Eſtate, till he is effectually Regenerated, and doth heartily entertain the *word of Reconciliation*, by and through Jeſus Chriſt. Till a real, ſpiritual, gracious Change is wrought in him, he is an Enemy to God, is actually provoking of God, and treaſuring up Wrath for himſelf againſt that Great Day, when the Diſobedient and Unbelieving, and thoſe who are unconcerned for their precious Souls, muſt be Deſtroyed, with an utter and an everlaſting Deſtruction. Thoſe who are now in the holieſt and happieſt Eſtate, were once in this Guilty and wretched Eſtate. *Such were ſome of you*, &c. 1 Cor. 6. 11. We our ſelves were *ſometime fooliſh diſobedient, ſerving divers Luſts*, &c. Tit. 3. 3.

3. You have too juſt ground to ſuſpect and fear you are in this dreadful Eſtate, till you make a faithful enquiry into your Eſtate. You cannot ordinarily have a ſound knowledge, that your Souls are in a good condition, without reflecting upon your ſelves, and deſcending to a ſtrict and faithful Examination. If you entertain an opinion that all is well and ſafe, as to your Souls, you have no occaſion to take any comfort

comfort in that Opinion, becauſe you have no ground or reaſon for it, which you know of. It may be meer *Diabolical Deluſion* for any thing you know to the contrary, having never duly enquired into the Matter. Yea,

4. The more ſecure and confident you are, having never made a thorough enquiry into the State of your Souls, the more ſad and dangerous your Eſtate is. For this argues you have ſinned your ſelves out of a ſenſe of all your ſpiritual and eternal Concernments; and that you have ſo entirely committed your ſelves to Satan's Conduct, as to rely on his Word for your Safety and Happineſs. 'Tis his Intereſt to do what he can to ſupport and heighten your Preſumption, and to prevent your being prevailed with to ſearch ſeriouſly into your Eſtate. He would deceive but few, did he not flatter them with hopes of Heaven at laſt. Could you ſee from one end and ſide of Hell, to the other, what a dreadful Spectacle would you behold? And amongſt thoſe enumerable multitudes of Damned Wretches which have gone thither in every Age of the World; how few would you ſee in compariſon of thoſe who were ſecure, confident, ſelf-deluding Sinners when they were on Earth? Who went thither Blindfold,

Blindfold, refuſing to ſearch into their Eſtate, and conſider whether they were going? Who were reſolved to Believe well, and Hope well, (as they phras'd it) of themſelves, without ever examining their Spiritual Eſtate, in defiance of all Warnings and Exhortations that could be adminiſtred unto them? What a deplorable thing is it, to conſider how People do at Satan's inſtigation, harden themſelves againſt Fear, and all Conſideration, ſo that they will not ſuſpect they may be in the way to Hell, till they do irrecoverably drop into it? And,

5. In what a fearful Eſtate wilt thou be, who obſtinately refuſeſt to conſider what thy condition really is, if at laſt thou be found an unreconciled Sinner, utterly unconcerned for the Salvation of thy Soul? If this be thy caſe when Death hath ſeized thee, thou muſt preſently ſink into unquenchable Flames. And then what a miſerable helpleſs Wretch wilt thou be for ever? What a dreadful thing will it be to be ſcared and rafted out of thy Spiritual Slumber and Sleep, by the actual Pains and Agonies of Damnation? Should a Man Sleeping at his own home, be a little moved with the cry of *Fire, Fire*! but without enquiring whether his Dwelling-place were

in

in Danger, ſhould compoſe himſelf again for Sleep, and not awake, till rafted out of his Sleep by the ſcorching heat and vehement noiſe of the Fire burning down his own Houſe, and ſhould he as ſoon as his Eyes are open, behold his Bed and all his Room in Flames, how gaſtly would he look, being thus affrighted out of his Sleep, and ſeeing no way to eſcape thoſe devouring Flames, which have ſeized on every part of his Room? What loud Outcries, and dreadful Schrieks would he utter? How deplorable ſhould we conceive his condition, ſhould we ſee his gaſtly Looks, and hear his Roarings, and his mournful Groans, whilſt Burning and Roaſting in the Flames of his own Houſe, not able to fly from that ſcorching Fire, nor any able to come near to help him, becauſe compaſſed in by thoſe furious and mercileſs Flames? If this would be ſo full of Terror to that miſerable unfortunate dying Perſon, and would fill the Beholders with moſt affectionate Trouble and Grief, what muſt the Dread and Horror of that Sinner be, who ſleeping ſecurely in his Sins, will take no warning, but at laſt is rafted out of his Sleep by the Flames of Hell, and finds himſelf as ſoon as ever he awakes, in unquenchable Burnings, and his Eſtate becomes one dreadful Schriek, continued

nued (if I may ſo phraſe it) to the utmoſt length of Eternity?

6. Remember, we muſt every one be concerned for our own Salvation, and we muſt every one try our ſelves, and examin our own Eſtate; for none can do theſe things effectually for us without our concurrence, and we muſt every one anſwer before God for our ſelves, and be Saved or Damned in our own Perſons. Others may adviſe and counſel us, give rules and directions to aſſiſt us in the Work, but they cannot peremptorily determin the Caſe, for our Hearts may be falſe and rotten, and corrupt, prophane, hypocritical and proud, when we are performing the outward parts of Duties; yea, when we perform them to the great liking and admiration of others. If it appear at laſt that we have been unconcerned for our Souls, and died impenitently in our Sins, who ſhall anſwer for us? Will any one take off the blame from us? Alas! we muſt anſwer for our ſelves, and bear our own Sins. Witneſſes and Accuſers there will be enough againſt us, but not one Advocate. Not one of all thoſe Multitudes who follow ſome wicked Mens Corpſes to the Grave, either can or dares go along with the Soul to God's Tribunal, to plead for and anſwer God on its behalf.

If

If thou art wicked and unconcerned for thy own Salvation, and dieſt Impenitent, no other Perſon will go to Hell in thy ſtead, but thou muſt bear thy own guilt, periſh, and be Damned and Tormented everlaſtingly in thy own Perſon. Search therefore ſpeedily into your Eſtate, and leave not Matters of ſuch weight, to all Adventures, and at Uncertainties. Let us be prevailed with to ſet about this work in all ſincerity, and without delay, that we may every one be acquainted with our own Eſtate, and learn how we are to manage and behave our ſelves for the future, and what courſe we are to apply our ſelves unto further, in order to our everlaſting Wellfare,

Some of you have paſt over a great many Years, and have no reaſon to expect that you ſhould live many more. Now, if you have been regardleſs of your Souls, and have hitherto neglected to examin your Eſtate, how ought you to be troubled for ſo great faults? What Sins might you have avoided? What Good might you have done? What Comfort might you have treaſur'd up for your ſelves, had you begun and faithfully gone through this Enquiry ſome Years ago? Take heed of continuing your Neglect; refuſe not to comply with this preſent Entreaty, leſt God ſhould give you over in Judgment,

Judgment, and you ſhould be hardned and ſealed to a moſt juſt and dreaful Condemnation. Why will you refuſe and ſin againſt your own Mercies? Why will you bring your own *Gray Hairs to the Grave with Sorrow*? Why will you pierce your own Hearts thorough with Sorrow? Why will you ruin and deſtroy your own ſelves? Is it not yet high time for you to know and underſtand what you have been doing? Whom you have been ſerving? And what is like to become of you for ever?

And you who are not ſo much ſtricken in years, even the youngeſt of you, who are come to years of Diſcretion, it behoves you to be very inquiſitive about the State of your Souls. What Conſternation and Amazement will ſeize you, if you ſhould be cut off in the midſt of your Years, and then eternally upbraid your ſelves with having ſpent the beſt of your Years, and the choiceſt of your Strength, yea, your whole time in a way of Hoſtility and War againſt God? You have no more aſſurance of time than the oldeſt Man has; and if you die in the flower of your Age, in an un-reconciled Eſtate, wholly unconcerned for the ſalvation of your Souls, you muſt as infallibly be Sentenced unto Hell, as the oldeſt and moſt overgrown Sinner in the World.

The

The infernal Flames will prey as violently on you who are thrown into them in your greener Age, as they will on thoſe who are caſt into them in their decayed and withered Age. A ſtrong Fire burns the greeneſt Log, as well as the drieſt, tho the green may make a little more noiſe for a while. Whatever your outward State and Circumſtances may be in this World, be you Rich or Poor, High or Low, Learned or Unlearned, Maſter or Servant, you are equally concerned in this Buſineſs. He that lives and dies in an un-regenerate Eſtate, wholly regardleſs of, and unconcerned for his Salvation, will loſe his Soul, his whole ſelf, and what hath any Man More? Or, if he have, What is all the World to one who is Damned, and in Eternal Torments?

Good Lord, open the Hearts of Sinners now, that they may entertain Advice! And ſo improve what hath been ſaid, that it may produce ſome good Effect! Let not every one continue in a groundleſs Soul-deſtroying Preſumption! Let not Satan triumph, that he carries all away headlong and unconcernedly unto Hell, in defiance of all perſwaſion to Conſideration and Enquiry! Lord, let not the Exhortation be wholly loſt! but cauſe ſome one Self-deluding

ding Wretch to be awakened, and brought to a right Mind!

Friend! what doſt thou intend to do? Wilt thou ſtubbornly ſhut thy Eyes and ſlumber, till Vengeance doth actually ſeize on thee? Till infinite Wrath come upon thee and ſurround thee, ſo that there ſhall be no eſcaping? Canſt thou be contented to be reproached by multitudes of forlorn undone Souls, that thou art the *Monſter* that would'ſt not hearken and conſider, but would'ſt voluntarily Damn thy Self, in oppoſition to all Perſwaſion? Search and try thy ſelf now at laſt, and take heed leſt there be in thee a Root that beareth Gall and Wormwood, and do not whilſt thou hear-eſt theſe words, *Bleſs thy ſelf in thy Heart, ſaying, I ſhall have Peace, tho I walk in the Imagination of my Heart, to add Drunkenneſs to Thirſt*, Deut. 29. 18, &c. Know thou who ever thou art, the Lord will not ſpare thee, but the Anger of the Lord and his Jealouſie ſhall ſmoke againſt thee, and all the Curſes that are written in his Book, ſhall lye upon thee; the Lord ſhall ſeparate thee unto Evil, according to all the Curſes of the Covenant, that are written in his Book.

Sirs, have ſome pity upon your ſelves! What hurt have your precious Souls ever done you, that you ſhould thus neglect and caſt

caſt them out of your thoughts, that you ſhould revenge your ſelves on them in this manner? How can you think to eſcape, if you ſtill neglect this Enquiry? What will you ſay for your ſelves at the Great Day of the Lord? Sure you will not pretend you were never warned, or perſwaded. And would not thoſe Powers and Faculties you employ in examining other matters, ſerve you to much better purpoſe on this account? And hath not God given you a Rule, and ſet you down Marks and Characters, by comparing your ſelves with which, you may acquire a diſtinct and true knowledge of your Eſtate? Do not your Bibles tell you very plainly, what ſorts of People will be ſhut out of the Kingdom? And how ſhould you know, whether you be or be not of thoſe numbers, if you refuſe to examin and make a true judgment of your ſelves? Preſume what you pleaſe of your ſelves, God cannot be deceived, nor will he be mocked. Death and Judgment will in due time fully diſcover the truth of your State, both to your ſelves, and to all the World. Can you imagin that this Enquiry ſhould do you any prejudice? If you have been, and are duly concerned for your Salvation, nothing can fill you with a greater and ſuch rational Joy and Comfort, than to perceive

perceive this atteſted upon a juſt Search, by the word of God; and that an eternal and glorious Inheritance is made ſure to you, by the promiſe of that God who cannot lye. Whereas a neglect of this Enquiry muſt needs deprive you of the beſt and greateſt comfort of your Lives. If you have been and ſtill are unconcerned for your Salvation, nothing can more miſchievouſly hinder your recovery out of that dangerous Eſtate you are in, than your refuſing to try and examin your ſelves. Make no delay therefore, but preſently betake your ſelves to what you are perſwaded unto. O! that you would be ſo kind to me, to grant me this one requeſt! I beg it of you for your own Sakes! I have no Intereſt to ſerve by it but your own, that you may preſently eſcape out of the ſnares of the Devil, and be ſafe from eternal Agonies, that you may not walk any longer in the Broad Road, which ends in Hell, and irrepairable Deſtruction, but may live in Peace and Comfort here, and Reign with Chriſt in Glory for ever.

Reaſon then and argue with your ſelves about this Matter. Cannot you diſcourſe thus with your ſelves? How terrible and dreadful a thing will it be, to be found at laſt a neglecter of Salvation, one who hath been

been all his Life unconcerned for his Soul! To have God and Chriſt Enemies, when I muſt appear before their Tribunal! He that commanded me into Being and Life, can with a word ſpeak me into Eternal Miſery! The Holy God, I muſt needs acknowledge, loves Holineſs, and cannot but hate Iniquity. He will in his Righteous Judgment, infallibly make a difference betwixt People. He will aſſuredly ſeparate the Holy from the Vile. *Then ſhall the Righteous be diſcerned from the Wicked, and he that ſerveth God, from him that ſerveth him not*, Mal. 3. 17, 18. I am at preſent undoubtedly of one of theſe Ranks. And doth it not much concern me to underſtand what my Eſtate is? Careleſs negligent Wretch! in omitting an enquiry of ſuch Importance ſo long! The time paſt ſhall ſuffice, to have lived in ſo ſupine and unthoughtful a manner! My Eyes ſhall not Sleep, nor will I give ſlumber to my Eye-lids, till I have made a diligent Enquiry, and do know what the Word of the Lord doth ſay of, and to me! I dare not lye down to Sleep, till I have examined my Eſtate! till, if it appear I have been unconcerned hitherto for my Soul and its Salvation; I have ſued heartily for Pardon and Peace through the Blood

of Chriſt! leſt I ſhould ſleep the Sleep of Death! leſt Deſtruction ſhould ſurprize me! And I ſhould awake in thoſe Flames which will never be quenched! Be gone all Excuſes, for I have no Buſineſs ſo neceſſary to be attended to, as this! I am not at leiſure to follow any Sports, or to mind Wealth, or Honors, yea, or the Neceſſaſaries of this preſent Life, whilſt I am Ignorant of the State of my Soul, and know not whether I have been duly concerned, that my Salvation may be made ſure! I will not any longer venture Eternity upon Uncertainties! Now I have been called on, and exhorted to apply my ſelf to this Examination! Should I refuſe to comply, God may juſtly ſuffer me to be hardned in my Sins. I may never have the like opportunity again! Tho I ſhould find I have hitherto been unconcerned for the happineſs of my Soul, yet eternal Miſery may be prevented! There yet remains place for Repentance! and ſome ground to hope that I may find favour with the Lord! Therefore I am reſolved, nothing ſhall divert me from going through with this Work. Lord! powerfully fix my Reſolution! Keep my my Mind and Heart intent on this Buſineſs, and give me the gracious aſſiſtance of thy holy

holy and powerful Spirit, to guide and carry me with ſucceſs thorough it!

Sixthly, You who have been careleſs of your Souls, and their Salvation, till this time, ſhould now be prevailed with to concern your ſelves with all ſeriouſneſs and earneſtneſs, that they may be ſecured. Could I ſet forth a miſerable Eſtate before you, in the moſt doleful Strains, and with the fulleſt account of aggravating Circumſtances imaginable, I ſhould not declare the thouſandth part of your Wretchedneſs. The Groans and Sobs of the Damned, manifeſt they cannot ſpeak what they feel; their Shrieks and Clamours are but broken Relations of the Horrors and Pains they ſink under. And you are obnoxious to all that Wrath which doth ſo terrifie and overwhelm them. If you ſtill continue ſecure, and cannot bemoan your ſelves, nor cry heartily for Pity and Mercy, your Danger encreaſes. Did you underſtand what you are doing, what Vengeance you are treaſuring up for your ſelves; whom you are Offending; what Souls you are Murthering; what a glorious, holy, powerful, juſt God you are Provoking, what a Change would ſoon appear in you? You would look upon all your Enjoyments as nothing

worth; you would look upon the Pleaſures, Riches and Honors of this World, as inſipid uſeleſs things. The whole World would be no more to you than a Priſon, or Dungeon, in which you are reſerved till the Sentence of Wrath is to be Executed on you. *The wicked is reſerved to the day of Deſtruction; they ſhall be brought forth to the day of Wrath,* Job 21. 30. Were you ſenſible what Love you deſpiſe; what Salvation you neglect; what Mercy you trample under your Feet; what Grace you reject; what Patience and Goodneſs you abuſe, and what great things you might lay hold on, what Inheritances you might obtain, what Glory you may be aſſured of, if you would but conſider things aright, and approve your ſelves truly Wiſe; what an alteration would ſoon appear in your Carriage and Conduct? You will in a little time be convinced fully of the truth of all this. When Death hath executed its Commiſſion againſt you, and your Souls are dragg'd into another World, continue Infidels if you can. When you have drank a few draughts more, ſpent a little time more in your Sports and Games, ſlept a few Nights, drudg'd and toil'd a few days more, you will ſee and know, and be convinced of theſe things in another manner.

ner. Then you will have no need of ſuch Miniſters to tell you of them, whoſe warnings you can now ſlight, whoſe Exhortations and Counſel you can now reject with Scorn and Contempt. For then you will hear the Sentence of Condemnation from One, the Glory of whoſe appearing, you will not be able to endure, whoſe Preſence will grieve and terrifie you.

But your caſe is not yet quite Deſperate. If you will now concern your ſelves heartily for your Souls, and apply your ſelves in good earneſt, to make their Salvation ſure, there is ſome ground for Hope, Mercy may yet be had. The Scepter of Grace is ſtill held forth. Your endleſs Miſery may yet be prevented. You may yet be made Holy and Gracious, behold God's reconciled Face, and inherit incomprehenſible Glory and Bleſſedneſs. Nothing will hinder but your wilfulneſs, your reſolved continuing unconcerned for theſe things. What Mercy is it that God will yet be favourable, notwithſtanding thou haſt at this time been unconcerned and ſtubborn in thy Enmity? Will yet, if thou turn ſincerely, pardon and blot out all is paſt? Will receive and honor, love and eternally glorifie thee? Who would not ſeek reconcili-

ation with all his might, with ſuch a gracious condeſcending, patient and merciful God? Who would go on to provoke ſuch a God, and Damn himſelf in oppoſition to ſuch Love, and Grace, and Mercy! What acceptance wouldſt thou find with God? What good wouldſt thou do thy ſelf? What Happineſs wouldſt thou treaſure up for thy ſelf to all future Generations? What Joy wouldſt thou occaſion in Heaven, wouldſt thou now be prevailed with to come out of thy miſerable ſinful State, and to concern thy ſelf as thou oughteſt for thy Soul, and its endleſs wellfare? Peruſe carefully theſe following Scriptures, *Luke* 15. 7. *and* 10, *and* 20, *&c. Iſa.* 55. 7. 2 *Cor.* 6. 2.

Take heed you do not prevent all this to encourage your ſelves to continue in your unconcernedneſs for your Salvation. For if inſtead of complying with Calls and Entreaties to accept of, and cloſe with the offers of Mercy God is pleaſed to make you, you ſtubbornly refuſe to hearken, to yea, abuſe them, to harden and embolden your ſelves in your Sins, your condition will become exceeding Dreadful, yea, quite hopeleſs, according to that account the holy Scriptures give of People under ſuch Circumſtances; as you may evidently ſee,

if

if you pleaſe to turn to, and read the following places in your Bibles, *Prov.* 1. 24. *&c. Prov.* 29. 1. *Heb.* 12. 17. *Luke* 19. 42. Yea, remember this will render your State in Hell terrible and tormenting to the higheſt degree. In what boiſterous Waves of inflamed Wrath ſhall thoſe Perſons be roll'd and toſt, who affectedly perſiſt in their Enmity againſt God, and contempt of the riches of his Grace! Why ſhould you be curious to ſecure to your ſelves the utmoſt efforts of Divine Diſpleaſure? How ſad muſt your eſtate be if after you have enjoyed the Goſpel, and been earneſtly perſwaded to concern your ſelves in good earneſt for your Salvation, you ſhould periſh and reap no advantage from all that Chriſt hath done, ſuffered and purchaſed for repenting, reforming Sinners? What a terrible day will the day of Chriſt's appearing be to you, if after all your coming to Church, hearing Prayers and Sermons, and partaking of Sacraments, you remain ſtubborn and untractable, ſenſual and worldly in your Minds, looſe, carnal and vicious in your Lives?

Be entreated, dearly Beloved, to lay theſe ſeriouſly to Heart, and forthwith to make a good improvement of them. Pleaſe not

your ſelves with purpoſes of taking them into conſideration hereafter, leſt Satan prove too ſubtle for you, and carry you away ſecurely to his own Appartments, full fraught with ſeemingly pious reſolves. What multitudes have cried out for Mercy, when it hath been too late! *Mat* 25. 11. 12.

If you are now willing to do what it behoves you to do, that you may ſecure the Salvation of your Souls, obſerve and follow theſe few Directions.

Firſt, Set your ſelves to a ſerious thorough conſideration of your preſent Eſtate. Weigh and inſiſt on this till you are fully convinced, your preſent State is ſuch, you cannot with any ſafety continue in it; and do firmly reſolve to alter your Courſe; preſs your danger and guilt upon your ſelves, till your Souls and Conſciences are mightily affected with your preſent Circumſtances, and you become in ſome meaſure ſenſible how much more deſirable their Condition is than yours, who have heartily concerned themſelves to ſecure the Salvation of their Souls. In other caſes, we think it a mighty blemiſh, to give occaſion for others to repute us inconſiderate and raſh. And ſure nothing better deſerves our beſt, our moſt mature and vivid thoughts than this Mat-

ter,

ter, becauſe it doth ſo nearly concern us. Can we expect prudently to avoid our Danger, and amend our Miſtakes, whilſt either ignorant of, or unaffected with them? Serious conſideration is a proper, if not the only preparatory expedient to bring us to a right Mind, to furniſh us with a juſt Notion and becoming Senſe of thoſe things, which are of eminent Importance, and to diſpoſe us to rectifie paſt Errors and Defaults. When the Prodigal came to himſelf, and conſidered the evil and dangerous caſe he was in, and how much better the very Servants in his Fathers Family were provided for than he was, he preſently reſolves to go thither, *Luke* 15. 17, 18. *Pſal.* 119. 59, 60. Set thy ſelf as in God's Preſence, call thy ſelf to account, and revive the remembrance of thy paſt Carriages. Call to mind how God hath expreſly declared ſuch or ſuch Affections of Soul, Speeche Actions, to be deteſtable abominable Sins, and hath declared from Heaven his Wrath againſt them, in ſuch or ſuch places of his holy Word. And then apply the ſame particularly and with all vehemency of affection and faithfulneſs to thy ſelf, till thou feeleſt the power and efficacy of them in thy own Spirit and Conſcience. Is this my Eſtate?

Doth the word of God ſpeak nothing but Terror and Indignation againſt me, whilſt I continue in this condition? Is the infinitely, holy, powerful juſt God my Enemy? O wretched Creature that I am! What ſhall I do! Is this an Eſtate to be reſted in! What is all the World, and all it can afford to me, if God ſhould pour forth the Vials of his Anger upon me! If I muſt paſs from the applauſe and favour of Men, from Houſes, Lands and Friends, to dwell with everlaſting Burnings! and be a Companion with Devils for ever! O how happy are they who have been wiſe for their Souls! who can look with comfort into the Holy Scriptures! and read over all thoſe Paſſages with Satisfaction, which Terrifie me, and are as ſo many Arrows ſticking faſt in my Soul! What a Fool have I been all my time! What Mercy and rich Grace muſt be diſcovered, if ever I eſcape Damnation! I cannot eſcape it, if I continue in this Eſtate! A great Change muſt be wrought in me. I muſt be made a new Creature, I muſt lead a new Life! And by God's Grace ſo I will! Bleſſed be the Lord, that he hath given me any ſight of my Danger! That he hath brought me to conſider, before my condition is abſolutely paſt remedy!

O

O what Trouble and Sorrow, have I been heaping on my ſelf! How bitter and gnawing now are all the things I counted pleaſant! How vile and contemptible are all the things for which I ventured my precious Soul! There is nothing now can relieve and do me good, nothing I can account precious, but an Intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt, and pardoning Love through him! O the Confuſion I am in! But I wiſh not that it were with me as in times paſt! That my vain Preſumption, ſtupidity and inſenſibleneſs might again return! No, but O that I had ſooner ſeen my Danger! and ſooner began my Retreat! Here I lye on the very brink of Hell! Had I made one ſtep further, I might have been among the Damned! and yet I ſcarce know which way to turn! O the proficiency others have made in the way to Heaven, who had no more time, nor outward Calls and Means than I had! O the peace and comfort they have! the Sweets with which their Souls are feaſted! O that I might love the Lord Chriſt in ſincerity! have an intereſt in his Merits! a right to his precious Promiſes! and that I may dutifully acknowledge his Authority! walk in his Laws! and know by experience what joy is to be found in Believing!

Believing! Well, by Divine Aſſiſtance, I will up and be doing! I will not loyter any longer! I now caſt away with abhorrence, and lay aſide every weight, and the Sin that hath ſo eaſily beſet me! Lord, do thou enlarge my Heart, and I will run the way of thy Commandments! May I ever have my eye fixed on Jeſus, the Author and Finiſher of a Believer's Faith! To thee holy Jeſus I flee for Refuge! Help me to lay hold on the Hope thou haſt ſet before me!

Secondly, Humble your ſelves deeply before the Lord, and offer unto him fervent earneſt Supplications and Prayers, to commiſerate and deliver you. No help can come but from Heaven, and it muſt be fetched thence by hearty affectionate Cries and Entreaties. Lay your ſelves therefore low before the Lord; acknowledge your Sins with Godly Sorrow and Grief: Rehearſe before him your ſad Eſtate; the aggravating Circumſtances of your Guilt, your Fears, your Guilt, the dreadful Curſes which hang over you; how ſenſible you are of his Diſpleaſure againſt Sin, that you are not able to bear his Wrath, and that nothing but Free-Grace can ſave and preſerve you. Juſtifie God in all his Laws, and in all his Threats, and in his executing of them. Confeſs heartily thou art a Monument

Monument of his Patience. Break forth into affectionate Admiration, that he hath born with thee ſo long, whereas, he might have cauſed his Vengeance to have overtaken thee long ago. And then with ſtrong Cries, and Tears too, if thou canſt beſeech him for his Mercy ſake, his name ſake, the Son of his love ſake, to pity, Pardon, help and ſanctifie thee. Conſider what encouragement thou haſt from theſe and the like Scriptures, *Pſal.* 145. 18, 19. *Pſal.* 32. 5, 6. *Pſal.* 50. 15. *Matt.* 7. 7, &c.

Lord, thou art Great, Holy, Juſt and Powerful, none can ſet himſelf againſt thee and Proſper! Thy purity and holineſs is ſuch, thou canſt not behold the leaſt Iniquity with Approbation! Thou haſt declared thy Wrath againſt every Sin! And in particular haſt revealed thy Indignation againſt this, and that, and the other Wickedneſs; and that thou wilt terribly avenge thy ſelf of ſuch Adverſaries as live impenitently in them! Lord, I am the vile Wretch who have been guilty of theſe Tranſgreſſions! I have lived a great while in them, and have often repeated theſe acts of Hoſtility againſt thee! O my Miſery, my Guilt, my Wretchedneſs! Whither ſhall I go? What ſhall I do? I cannot flee from thy

thy Preſence! Where ever I am, thy Arm can reach me! I cannot bear thy Frowns! thy Terrors make me afraid! Damnation and Hell are the leaſt I have deſerved! O the Light, the Love, the Means I have ſinned againſt! I have nothing to ſay for my ſelf! who ſhall plead for me! Methinks I am now ſinking! Hell appears ready to ſwallow me up! Juſt and Righteous art thou O God! No puniſhments are too great for ſo wicked, ſo ungrateful, ſo vile and obſtinate a Wretch as I am! In the very midſt of my Fears and Anguiſh, I cannot but wonder that the Sentence of Condemnation is not already pronounced againſt, and executed on me! O what long-ſuffering goodneſs haſt thou manifeſted towards me, the worſt and greateſt of Sinners! Bleſſed be thy Name for thy Long-ſuffering Patience towards me! Whither ſhall I now turn! Will the holy God have Mercy on ſuch a deſperate Sinner! To whom ſhall I go in theſe Straits! Creatures cannot help me! My Luſts and Sins have brought all this Miſery upon me! All will fail me, unleſs the Lord will be pleaſed to look down in Mercy upon me! And it is the Lord I have offended! How ſhall I go to a provoked God! Yet all my hope muſt be from

from him! To the Lord I will go, I will lie at his Feet! I will throw my ſelf wholly upon his Mercy! Lord, I have heard that thou art Gracious, Long-ſuffering, ſlow to Wrath, and of great Goodneſs. Thou haſt ſaid ſo of thy ſelf. Thou haſt the words of eternal Life. There is Forgiveneſs with thee that thou mayeſt be feared. Thou haſt contrived a way for the glorifying of thy Mercy, in ſaving the greateſt Sinners who truly repent, and turn from the evil of their doings unto thee, with all their Hearts. Lord, here behold a miſerable mouring Sinner, than whom none ever ſtood more in need of Mercy! Extend thy wonderful Grace to me! I come to thee in thy Son's Name, I depend intirely on his Merits; I plead with thee the only gracious Promiſes! Suſtain now a ſinking Soul! I loath and abhor my ſelf! O let thy Bowels ern over me! Tho I ſtand on the brink of Hell, let thy Grace prevent my falling into that Bottomleſs-Pit! Say unto this Soul, *Live*! May I, who deſerve to houl for ever under the dreadful teſtimonies of thy Diſpleaſure, be effectually delivered from Sin, Guilt and Condemnation! May I be Pardoned, made Holy, and ſing forth the Praiſes of thy rich and abounding Grace to all Eternity! Conſider

Iſa. 63. 15, 16.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, If you take pains with your ſelves, and faithfully perform what you have been adviſed to already, you will eaſily perceive what is further neceſſary to be done by you, to make ſecure the Salvation of your Souls; and you will be diſpoſed to urge upon your ſelves, and improve ſuch Counſel as ſhall be offered you, and is manifeſtly pertinent to this purpoſe. I will therefore propound the other Directions you are to obſerve altogether, and only give you brief hints for your future Conduct, leaving you to imprint them on your own Hearts, by meditating on, and expoſtulating with your ſelves about them, till you feel they have their proper and due influence on your Souls and Lives. You muſt then endeavour to acquire a ſound knowledge of the gracious method God hath been pleaſed to pitch on, for the bringing of Sinners into a State of Reconciliation and Peace with himſelf. You muſt heartily entertain the great Truths he hath revealed concerning the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Thoſe which concern his Perſon, his Natures, and the Commiſſion the Father hath given him. And you muſt ſincerely cloſe with Chriſt in all his Offices, depending wholly on his Merits, Interceſſion

ceſſion, and Influences; ſubmitting to his Authority, diligently following his Example, and faithfully keeping his Laws, *For there is not Salvation in any other*, Acts 4. 12. You muſt labour to underſtand diſtinctly the Baptiſmal Vow, with Underſtanding and Judgment, ſolemnly devote, conſign and dedicate your ſelves to God, through Chriſt, and daily addict your ſelves to the conſcientious performing of that Vow, as long as you Live. Therefore you muſt diligently read and ſtudy the Holy Scriptures, and make them the ſole Rule of your Faith, your Worſhip, your moral Conduct, or Practice; for they *are able to make you wiſe unto Salvation through Faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus*, 2 Tim. 3. 15. Read the word of God daily with a fixed Attention, and holy fervent Deſires, that you may find it powerful to ſubdue Corruption, and bring you to a ſaving Acquaintance with Chriſt, and to nouriſh your Souls in all *Godlineſs of Living*. Attend diligently on the Miniſtry of the Word, and wait conſcientiouſly on God in thoſe Ordinances he hath inſtituted for the Converſion and Edification of Souls. Take heed of Cuſtomarineſs and Formality in theſe. Uſe them as means God hath

hath appointed for higher Ends, and be not ſatisfied till you really perceive they are Sanctified to you, and have ſuch an effect on you that you do thereby grow in Knowledge, Grace, and practical Holineſs. You muſt renounce the Society of looſe and vicious People, and ſhun the company of thoſe who deride and mock at Religion and Holineſs, appearing in their Truth and Power, *Prov.* 13. 20. And wonderful Advantage will accrue to you, if you do ordinarily accuſtom your ſelves to croſs the deſign of Temptations, and make an Advantage of them, to put you with greater ſeriouſneſs and fervency on acting thoſe Graces, and performing thoſe Duties which are moſt oppoſite and contrary to the Sins, the Enemies of your Souls would draw you unto.

You who have been and are in good earneſt concerned for the Salvation of your Souls, muſt diligently attend to what doth peculiarly belong to you, conſidering the State you are in. Give God the glory of that Grace he hath vouchſafed you. You were Ignorant, Blind, Fooliſh and Diſobedient formerly, as well as others. Praiſe and Magnifie God with all your might, that he hath made you know and follow after *the things which belong to your Peace.* How ſhould you bleſs the Lord who hath made

made you the Triumph of your Saviour's Love, whereas you might have been Monuments of his Anger? Pity, Pray for, advise do what you can to convince, awaken, and recover them, who appear altogether careless of, and unconcerned for their Salvation. Hold fast what you have received, proceed forward in the work you have begun. *Grow in Grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* Watch over, and assist one another all you are able. *Heb.* 3. 12, 13. So run that ye may obtain. Persevere to the end, and let none take away your Crown, *Rev.* 3. 11.

In a word, every Man should be very much concerned for the Salvation of his own Soul. Then let us all forthwith shake off Sloth, remembring we are hastning apace towards Eternity. *Do the wicked do evil with both hands earnestly,* Mic. 7. 3. And shall we fold our Arms, and refuse to take a little pains for the obtaining of that Inheritance, which is reserved in the Heavens? We have done too much already to prejudice our Souls; now let us use all possible care and industry to recover and save them.

Sirs, I beseech you in the Bowels of Christ, and by all that should be dear and

valuable

valuable to you, to concern your ſelves ſo for your Salvation, as in a little time you will certainly wiſh you had. What a change will Death quickly make in every one of you? O loſe not Heaven and eternal Glory, for Shadows! Loſe not your Souls for Trifles! *Quit you now like Men. Be watchful, ſerious and diligent. Gird up the loins of your minds, be ſober, and hope to the end. My Brethren, dearly beloved and longed for; my Joy and Crown, ſo ſtand faſt in the Lord. Finally Brethren, whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good Report; if there be any Vertue, if there be any Praiſe, think on and practice theſe things with all your might and affection, and with all perſeverance. Be ye ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, foraſmuch as you know, that your Labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord.*

FINIS.